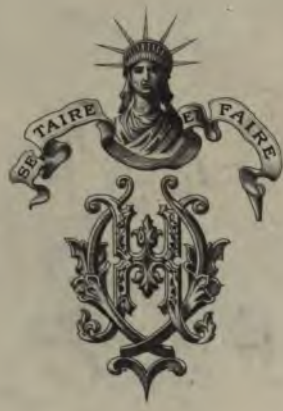
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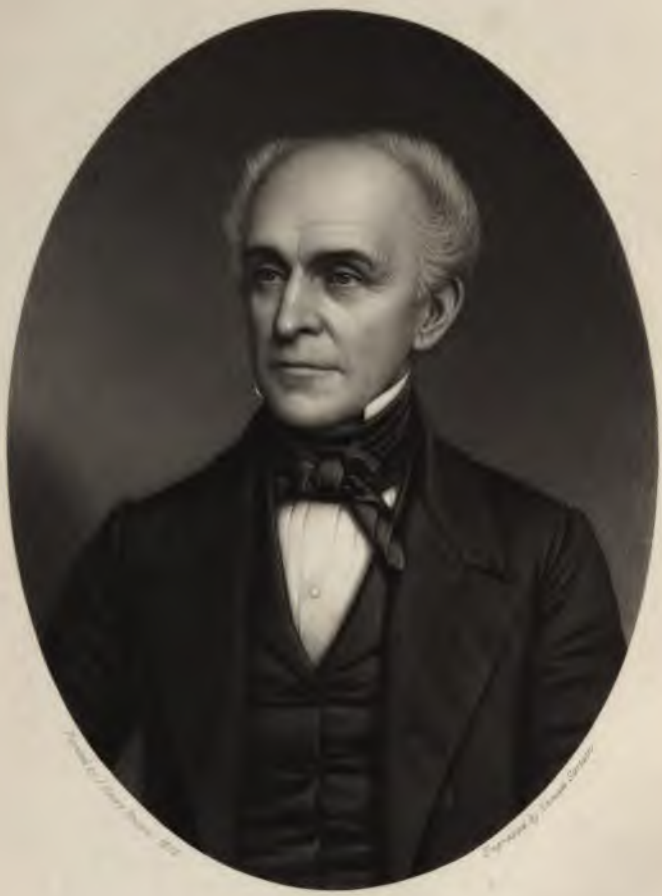

Edward Coles

SKETCH

OF

EDWARD COLES,

SECOND GOVERNOR OF ILLINOIS,

AND OF THE

SLAVERY STRUGGLE OF 1823-4.

PREPARED FOR THE CHICAGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

Elihu Benjamin

BY E. B. WASHBURNE,

HONORARY MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY.

"The world knows nothing of its greatest men."
—*Philip Van Artevelde.*

CHICAGO:
JANSEN, McCLURG & COMPANY.
1882.

TO THE

HON. JOSEPH GILLESPIE.

One of the connecting links between the earlier and the later Illinois, and who in his career as a lawyer, a magistrate and a citizen, has illustrated the history of our State for more than half a century, this Paper is dedicated, as a slight token of the profound respect and high esteem in which he is held by

The Writer.

CHICAGO, May, 18, 1881.

HON. E. B. WASHBURNE:

Dear Sir:—I have the honor to inform you that at a stated meeting of the Chicago Historical Society, held last evening on motion of Hon. I. N. Arnold, the following preamble and resolution were unanimously adopted:

" *Whereas*, The late Edward Coles, second Governor of Illinois, was one of the most interesting characters in American history, and especially distinguished for the great and important services he rendered in preventing the extension of slavery into this State; and

Whereas, Many of the letters, papers and manuscripts of Gov. Coles have been placed, by his family, in the hands of our honored associate, the Hon. E. B. Washburne, with a view of preparing a Sketch of his life and services; and knowing that such a Sketch would be a most valuable and interesting contribution to the history of our State, and that Mr. Washburne, from his familiar knowledge of the history of Illinois, and his deep interest in the subject, would execute such work with fidelity, skill and ability: Therefore,

Resolved, That the Hon. E. B. Washburne, on behalf of the Chicago Historical Society, and all students of American History, is earnestly requested to prepare for this society and publish a Paper on Governor Edward Coles."

I have the honor to be
Very respectfully,
ALBERT D. HAGER, Secretary.

CHICAGO, Illinois, May 26, 1881.

ALBERT D. HAGER, ESQ.,
Secretary of Chicago Historical Society.

Dear Sir: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th instant, enclosing the

resolution of the Historical Society, requesting me to prepare for the Society a Paper on Governor Edward Coles. I have in my hands many of the papers, letters manuscripts, &c., of Governor Coles, placed at my disposition by his son, Edward Coles, Esq., of Philadelphia, and I have spent some time in examining and looking them over with a view to the publication of some notice of that distinguished man. Whatever I may prepare, I will cheerfully contribute to the Society, unworthy and imperfect as the contribution may be.

Important and interesting as the papers and correspondence which I have, may be found, there is a great deal lacking that is necessary for the full accomplishment of such a purpose as I have in view. Many years ago Governor Coles presented to the Alton Historical Society a large mass of books, papers, and documents, pertaining to the history of the State during his administration. He requested, however, that they might be lent to his old friend, the Rev. J. M. Peck, to be used in a historical collection he was then making.

Unfortunately, Mr. Peck's house was consumed by fire, involving the destruction of all this invaluable material. I have, however, made the best use I could of what I have in hand, and my Paper, when finished, I will send to you to go into the archives of your Society.

I have the honor to be,

Very truly,

Your obedient servant,

E. B. WASHBURNE.

"NOT being aware of any consideration which should restrain me, but on the contrary, believing that my present office increases the obligation I am under, as a good citizen, to exert myself to enlighten the minds of my fellow citizens, and strenuously oppose every measure which I am convinced is unjust in principle, or injurious in its effects, and believing slavery to be both injurious and impolitic, I believe myself bound, both as a citizen and an officer, to do all in my power to prevent its introduction into this State."

(Letter of Governor Coles to Roberts Vaux of Philadelphia, dated Edwardsville, Illinois, June 27, 1823.)

"THE part which thee has been called to act privately, as well as publicly and officially, in regard to the rights of mankind and for the upholding of the principles of justice and mercy toward a degraded and oppressed portion of our fellow beings, ought to be regarded as a manifestation of Providential power, concerning which we must always believe the same Divine interposition will be extended in every emergency. I am altogether satisfied that it is reserved for thee to witness the triumph of truth and beneficence in the struggle to which thee has been exposed, and what is of infinately greater value, as it respects thyself, to reap a plenteous harvest in the most precious of all rewards—the approbation of Heaven! I feel a deep interest in thy character, and a lively gratitude for thy services, and it will always be among the purest consolations of my mind to be assured of thy welfare and happiness."

(Letter of Roberts Vaux to Edward Coles, dated Philadelphia, 6 mo., 14, 1824.)

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER VI.

CHAPTER VII.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHAPTER IX.

CHAPTER X.

CHAPTER XI.

CHAPTER XII.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHAPTER XV.

CHAPTER XVI.

CHAPTER XVII.

CHAPTER XVIII.

GOVERNOR EDWARD COLES

AND THE

SLAVERY STRUGGLE OF 1823-24.

CHAPTER I.

PAPER PREPARED FOR THE CHICAGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY; THE CHARACTER OF GOVERNOR COLES REVEALED; LITTLE KNOWN OF HIM AT THE PRESENT DAY; HIS RELATION TO THE SLAVERY STRUGGLE OF 1823-4; HIS CORRESPONDENCE, PRIVATE PAPERS AND MANUSCRIPTS IN THE HANDS OF HIS SON, EDWARD COLES, OF PHILADELPHIA.

THE CHICAGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY has done me the honor to invite me to prepare a Paper on EDWARD COLES, the second Governor of the State of Illinois. No sketch of Governor Coles would be complete without connecting with it a reference to the struggle to make Illinois a slave State, which occurred during his term of office, and in which he took so prominent and effective a part; I shall, therefore, not only speak of Governor Coles, but shall briefly trace the history of one of the most

remarkable contests, not only in the annals of our State, but in the nation.

What I shall make known to you of the character, the ability and the statesmanship of Edward Coles, will reveal to you a man whose life will, I am certain, challenge your admiration and respect, and whose services to our State will entitle him to the lasting gratitude of us all. In him is illustrated the saying which Sir Henry Taylor puts into the mouth of Philip Van Artevelde:*

"The world knows nothing of its greatest men."

That there is so little known to the people of Illinois in relation to Governor Coles, is due to the fact of the comparatively short time he resided in the State (considering that he had been Governor), and to the further fact of his complete retirement from public life when yet a young man.

Though a resident of the State for more than forty-one years, I must confess to have had only a general knowledge of the character of Governor Coles, and of the services he rendered to our commonwealth. I knew that he was Governor of the State at the most critical epoch of its history, and

*"He was one
Of many thousand, such as die betimes,
Whose story is a fragment known to few."
—*Philip Van Artevelde: A Dramatic Roman*

that all his official and personal influence had been wielded to save Illinois from that blighting curse of human slavery which had been attempted to be fastened upon a soil that was supposed to have been consecrated to freedom by the ordinance of 1787. What little knowledge I had, however, inspired in me great respect for his character; and desirous to know more about him, I made my wishes and my purposes known to his son, Edward Coles, Esq., a well-known and highly respected citizen of Philadelphia, who has been kind enough to place in my hands much of the correspondence and many private papers and manuscripts of his father. A study of these papers and of the contemporary history of the State, enables me to contribute to the Society much that may not be generally known in regard to Governor Coles, and to aid, perhaps, in rescuing from forgetfulness and oblivion the name of a man whose memory should ever be cherished by the people of our State with pride and affection.

CHAPTER II.

EDWARD COLES, BORN DECEMBER 15, 1786, IN ALBEMARLE COUNTY, VIRGINIA; EDUCATED AT HAMPDEN SIDNEY, AND WILLIAM AND MARY COLLEGE; HIS CLASS-MATES; HIS FAMILY; HIS RELATIONS TO THE DISTINGUISHED MEN OF HIS DAY; MADE PRIVATE SECRETARY TO MR. MADISON IN 1809; RESOLVES TO LIBERATE HIS SLAVES AND REMOVE FROM VIRGINIA.

EDWARD COLES was born December 15th, 1786, in Albemarle County, Virginia, on the old family estate called "Enniscorthy," on the Green Mountain. His father was JOHN COLES, who had been a colonel in the Revolutionary war. Having been fitted for college by private tutors, he was sent to Hampden Sidney, where he remained till the autumn of 1805, and was then removed to William and Mary college, at Williamsburg. He remained at William and Mary till the summer of 1807, when he left the college a short time before the final and graduating examination. Though Bishop Madison, cousin of President Madison, then president of the college, was perfectly satisfied with the progress young Coles had made in his studies while under his supervision, it was impossible for him to graduate on account of a severe fracture of his leg, and which at one time threatened the loss

of the limb. This so interfered with his studies that he got behind in his class. Among his classmates who became distinguished in public life, were Lieutenant-General Scott, President John Tyler, William S. Archer, United States Senator from Virginia, and Mr. Justice Baldwin, of the Supreme Court of the United States. The family of Coles was at the time a prominent one in Virginia, and allied to some of the most distinguished politicians and statesmen of that ancient commonwealth. The first two years after leaving college young Coles spent at Enniscorthy in reading and study, going over the whole range of history and politics. Though the father, Colonel John Coles, was not in public life, he had his most intimate friends among the distinguished politicians and statesmen of the day. The family mansion was the seat of the old-fashioned Virginian hospitality. It was visited by Patrick Henry, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, the Randolphs, Tazwell, Wirt, and many others of the leading men of that time. The following letter of Patrick Henry to the father of Edward Coles, with a *fac-simile*, may be found interesting:

RED HILL, March 19th, 1797.

Dear Sir:—Your Favor, by cousin Walter, I rec^d^. I am extremely obliged to you for the Attention you have

paid to sister Woods' affair. Poor Woman, I wished to serve her, but am situated so far from her that I can never think of riding so far as her place. As Mr. Peter Johnston and his Family are to be here in a very little Time, I shall wait 'til I see him; and I hope to settle some plan with him which may answer.

I refer to the young gentle[n] for my opinion as to Lyle's Matter. I congratulate you on the very promising appearance of your two sons. They are fine Boys indeed.

Mrs. Henry joins me in affectionate Regards to Mrs. Coles and the family, and I am, Dear sir,

Affectionately yours,

P. Henry.

P. S.—When shall we see you all here? I want you to tell me how to manage my low grounds, and to make crops, &c., &c.

The year 1809 found Edward Coles a young man twenty-three years of age, the proprietor of a plantation which his father had bequeathed to him before his death, the previous year, and a certain number of slaves. Of a polished education, fine personal appearance, good manners, and irreproachable character, President Madison tendered him the appointment of his private secretary, a position at that time of much dignity and importance. It was made particularly pleasant for young Coles, from the acquaintance of his family with Mr. Madison, and from the fact of his becoming a member of the Presidential household.

It was in his earlier college days that Mr. Coles had first presented to his mind the abstract question whether or not man had a right of property in his fellow man. He read everything on the subject that came in his way, and listened to lectures on the rights of man. The more he studied, the more he reflected, the more impossible was it for him to reconcile the immortal declaration "that all men are born free and equal," with a state of society which held human beings in bondage. He resolved, therefore, in his own mind that he would not only not hold slaves himself nor live in a State which upheld the institution of slavery. One reason which determined him to accept the appointment as private secretary to Mr. Madison was, because he believed that through acquaintances he could make at Washington, he could better determine in what part of the non-slaveholding portion of the Union it would be most advantageous for him to settle. Mr. Coles remained the private secretary of Mr. Madison for six years, enjoying in the fullest degree the confidence of that distinguished man. He soon acquired much knowledge of public affairs and of public men. His great intelligence and his suavity of manner made him very useful to the President and very popular generally.

He also enjoyed the confidence and friendship of Mr. Monroe, Mr. Jefferson and many noted men of the day, to a remarkable degree.

CHAPTER III.

MR. JEFFERSON AND MR. COLES; THEIR CORRESPONDENCE IN 1814; THE LETTER OF MR. COLES; THE CELEBRATED ANSWER OF MR. JEFFERSON; CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN MR. COLES AND NICHOLAS BIDDLE.

THE relations of Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Coles seem to have been of a very friendly character, and arising from the similarity of their views on the question of slavery, and their sympathy for each other in holding doctrines so much at variance with the prevailing sentiment in their own State. It was in July, 1814, that Mr. Coles, still the private secretary of Mr. Madison, opened a correspondence with Mr. Jefferson, which drew forth from the latter the most pronounced views on the question of slavery that had ever been put forth by so distinguished a man residing in a slave-holding community. I present here the correspondence. Nothing can better illustrate the character and deep convictions of Mr. Coles than his letter to Mr. Jefferson, dated July 14, 1814, and which shows how deeply he felt on the subject of slavery:

Edward Coles to Thomas Jefferson.

WASHINGTON, July 31, 1814.

Dear Sir:—I never took up my pen with more hesitation, or felt more embarrassment than I now do in ad-

dressing you on the subject of this letter. The fear of appearing presumptuous distresses me, and would deter me from venturing thus to call your attention to a subject of such magnitude, and so beset with difficulties as that of a general emancipation of the slaves of Virginia, had I not the highest opinion of your goodness and liberality, in not only excusing me for the liberty I take, but in justly appreciating my motives in doing so.

I will not enter on the *right* which man has to enslave his brother man, nor upon the moral and political effects of slavery on individuals or on society; because these things are better understood by you than by me. My object is to entreat and beseech you to exert your knowledge and influence in devising and getting into operation some plan for the gradual emancipation of slavery. This difficult task could be less exceptionally and more successfully performed by the revered fathers of all our political and social blessings than by any succeeding statesmen; and would seem to come with peculiar propriety and force from those whose valor, wisdom and virtue have done so much in ameliorating the condition of mankind. And it is a duty, as I conceive, that devolves particularly on you, from your known philosophical and enlarged view of subjects, and from the principles you have professed and practiced through a long and useful life, pre-eminently distinguished as well by being foremost in establishing on the broadest basis the rights of man, and the liberty and independence of your country, as in being throughout honored with the most important trusts by your fellow citizens, whose confidence and love you have carried with you into the shades of old age and retirement. In the calm of this retirement you might, most beneficially to society, and with much addition to your own fame, avail yourself of

that love and confidence to put into complete practice those hallowed principles contained in that renowned Declaration, of which you were the immortal author, and on which we founded our right to resist oppression and establish our freedom and independence.

I hope the fear of failing, at this time, will have no influence in preventing you from employing your pen to eradicate this most degrading feature of British Colonial policy, which is still permitted to exist, notwithstanding its repugnance as well to the principles of our revolution as to our free institutions. For however prized and influential your opinions may now be, they will still be much more so when you shall have been taken from us by the course of nature. If therefore your attempt should now fail to rectify this unfortunate evil—an evil most injurious both to the oppressed and to the oppressor—at some future day when your memory will be consecrated by a grateful posterity, what influence, irresistible influence will the opinions and writings of Thomas Jefferson have in all questions connected with the rights of man, and of that policy which will be the creed of your disciples. Permit me then, my dear Sir, again to entreat your great powers of mind and influence, and to employ some of your present leisure, in devising a mode to liberate one-half of our fellow beings from an ignominious bondage to the other, either by making an immediate attempt to put in train a plan to commence this goodly work, or to leave human nature the invaluable Testament—which you are so capable of doing—how best to establish its rights: so that the weight of your opinion may be on the side of emancipation when that question shall be agitated, and that it will be sooner or later is most certain. That it may be soon is my most ardent prayer—that it will be, rests with you.

I will only add as an excuse for the liberty I take in addressing you on this subject which is so particularly interesting to me, that from the time I was capable of reflecting on the nature of political society, and of the rights appertaining to man, I have not only been principled against slavery, but have had feelings so repugnant to it as to decide me not to hold them; which decision has forced me to leave my native State, and with it all my relations and friends. This I hope will be deemed by you some excuse for the liberty of this intrusion, of which I gladly avail myself to assure you of the very great respect and esteem with which I am, my dear Sir, your very sincere and devoted friend,

EDWARD COLES.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

The celebrated answer of Mr. Jefferson to this letter, though before published, will bear to be reprinted:

MONTICELLO, Aug. 25, 1814.

Dear Sir:—Your favor of July 31 was duly received, and was read with peculiar pleasure; the sentiments breathed through the whole do honor to both the head and heart of the writer. Mine on the subject of the slavery of negroes have long since been in possession of the public, and time has only served to give them stronger root. The love of justice and the love of country plead equally the cause of these people, and it is a mortal reproach to us that they should have pleaded it so long in vain, and should have produced not a single effort, nay I fear not much serious willingness, to relieve them and ourselves from our present condition of moral and political reprobation. From those of the former

generation who were in the fullness of age when I came into public life, which was while our controversy with England was on paper only, I soon saw that nothing was to be hoped. Nursed and educated in the daily habit of seeing the degraded condition, both bodily and mental, of those unfortunate beings, not reflecting that that degradation was very much the work of themselves and their fathers, few minds had yet doubted but that they were as legitimate subjects of property as their horses or cattle. The quiet and monotonous course of colonial life had been disturbed by no alarm, and little reflection on the value of liberty; and when alarm was taken at an enterprise of their own, it was not easy to carry them the whole length of the principles which they invoked for themselves. In the first or second session of the legislature after I became a member, I drew to this subject the attention of Colonel Bland, one of the oldest, ablest, and most respected members, and he undertook to move for certain moderate extensions of the protection of the laws to these people. I seconded his motion, and, as a younger member, was more spared in the debate; but he was denounced as an enemy to his country, and was treated with the grossest indecorum. From an early stage of our revolution, other and more distant duties were assigned to me, so that from that time till my return from Europe in 1789, and I may say till I returned to reside at home in 1809, I had little opportunity of knowing the progress of public sentiment here on this subject. I had always hoped that the younger generation, receiving their early impressions after the flame of liberty had been kindled in every breast, and had become as it were the vital spirit of every American; that the generous temperament of youth, analogous to the motion of their blood, and above

the suggestions of avarice, would have sympathized with oppression wherever found, and proved their love of liberty beyond their own share of it. But my intercourse with them since my return, has not been sufficient to ascertain that they had made towards this point the progress I had hoped. Your solitary but welcome voice is the first which has brought this sound to my ear, and I have considered the general silence which prevails on this subject as indicating an apathy unfavorable to every hope, yet the hour of emancipation is advancing in the march of time. It will come; and whether brought on by the generous energy of our own minds, or by the bloody process of St. Domingo, excited and conducted by the power of our present enemy, if once stationed permanently within our country, and offering asylum and arms to the oppressed, is a leaf of our history not yet turned over.

As to the method by which this difficult work is to be effected, if permitted to be done by ourselves, I have seen no proposition so expedient on the whole, as that of emancipation of those born after a given day, and of their education and expatriation at a proper age. This would give time for a gradual extinction of that species of labor and substitution of another, and lessen the severity of the shock which an operation so fundamental cannot fail to produce. The idea of emancipating the whole at once, the old as well as the young, and retaining them here, is of those only who have not the guide of either knowledge or experience of the subject; for men probably of any color, but of this color we know, brought up from their infancy without necessity for thought or forecast, are by their habits rendered as incapable as children of taking care of themselves, and are extinguished promptly wherever industry is necessary for

raising the young. In the meantime they are pests in society by their idleness, and the depredations to which this leads them. Their amalgamation with the other color produces a degradation to which no lover of his country, no lover of excellence in the human character, can innocently consent.

I am sensible of the partialities with which you have looked towards me as the person who should undertake this salutary but arduous work; but this, my dear Sir, is like bidding old Priam to buckle the armor of Hector "*trementibus aevo humeris et inutile ferrum cingi.*" No, I have overlived the generation with which mutual labors and perils begat mutual confidence and influence. This enterprise is for the young, for those who can follow it up and bear it through to its consummation. It shall have all my prayers, and these are the only weapons of an old man. But in the meantime, are you right in abandoning this property, and your country with it? I think not. My opinion has ever been, that until more can be done for them, we should endeavor, with those whom fortune has thrown on our hands, to feed and clothe them well, protect them from ill usage, require such reasonable labor only as is performed voluntarily by freeman and be led by no repugnancies to abdicate them, and our duties to them. The laws do not permit us to turn them loose, if that were for their good; and to commute them for other property is to commit them to those whose usage of them we cannot control. I hope then, my dear sir, you will reconcile yourself to your country, and its unfortunate condition; that you will not lessen its stock of sound disposition by withdrawing your portion from the mass, that, on the contrary you will come forward in the public councils, become the missionary of this doctrine truly christian, insinuate and incul-

cate it softly but steadily thro' the medium of writing and conversation, associate others in your labors, and when the phalanx is formed, bring on and press the proposition perseveringly until its accomplishment. It is an encouraging observation that no good measure was ever proposed which, if duly pursued, failed to prevail in the end; we have proof of this in the history of the endeavors in the British parliament to suppress that very trade which brought this evil on us, and you will be supported by the religious precept "be not wearied in well doing." That your success may be as speedy and complete, as it will be of honorable and immortal consolation to yourself, I shall as fervently and sincerely pray, as I assure you of my great friendship and respect.

TH. JEFFERSON.

P. S. Will you give to the enclosed letter the proper address of place to find your brother?

Mr. Coles acknowledged the receipt of the letter of Mr. Jefferson as follows:

This letter of Mr. Jefferson, one of the most remarkable and one of the most honorable to his character he ever wrote, is given, also, in *fac simile.*

Letter from Edward Coles to Thomas Jefferson.

WASHINGTON, Sep. 26th, '14.

I must be permitted again to trouble you, my dear Sir, to return my grateful thanks for the respectful and friendly attention shown to my letter in your answer of the 25th ult. Your favorable reception of sentiments not generally avowed, if felt, by our countrymen, but which have ever been so inseparably interwoven with my opinions and feelings as to become, as it were, the rudder that shapes my course, even against a strong tide

Dear Sir

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I assure you of my great friendsh

Edward Coles esq.

P. S. will you give to the indor
the proper address of place to find

proof of this in the history of this endeavour in
are that very trade which brought this evil on us.
religious precept of 'be not wearied in well doing.'
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self & shall as fervently & sincerely pray as
hip and respect.

Th: Jefferson

and Colleton
your brother?

of interest and of local partialities, could not but be in the highest degree gratifying to me. And your interesting and highly prized letter conveying them to me in such flattering terms, would have called forth my acknowledgments before this but for its having been forwarded to me to the Springs, and from thence it was again returned here before I received it, which was only a few days since.

Your indulgent treatment encourages me to add that I feel very sensibly the force of your remarks on the impropriety of yielding to my repugnancies in abandoning my property in slaves and my native State. I certainly should never have been inclined to yield to them if I had supposed myself capable of being instrumental in bringing about a liberation, or that I could by my example ameliorate the condition of these oppressed people. If I could be convinced of being in the slightest degree useful in doing either, it would afford me very great happiness, and the more so as it would enable me to gratify many partialities by remaining in Virginia. But never having flattered myself with the hope of being able to contribute to either, I have long since determined, and should but for my bad health ere this, have removed, carrying along with me those who had been my slaves, to the country northwest of the river Ohio.

Your prayers I trust will not only be heard with indulgence in Heaven, but with influence on Earth. But I cannot agree with you that they are the only weapons of one at your age; nor that the difficult work of cleansing the escutcheon of Virginia of the foul stain of slavery can best be done by the young. To expect so great and difficult an object, great and extensive powers, both of mind and influence, are required, which can never be possessed in so great a degree by the young as by the old. And among the few of the former who might unite the disposition with the requisite capacity, they are too

often led by ambitious views to go with the current of popular feeling rather than to mark out a course for themselves, where they might be buffeted by the waves of opposition; and indeed it is feared that these waves would in this case be too strong to be effectually resisted by any but those who had gained by a previous course of useful employment the firmest footing in the confidence and attachment of their country. It is with them, therefore, I am persuaded, that the subject of emancipation must originate; for they are the only persons who have it in their power effectually to arouse and enlighten the public sentiment, which in matters of this kind ought not to be expected to lead, but to be led; nor ought it to be wondered at that there should prevail a degree of apathy with the general mass of mankind, where a mere passive principle of right has to contend against the weighty influence of habit and interest. On such a question there will always exist in society a kind of *vis inertia*, to arouse and overcome, which requires a strong impulse, which can only be given by those who have acquired a great weight of character, and on whom there devolves in this case a most solemn obligation. It was under these impressions that I looked to you, my dear Sir, as the first of our aged worthies to awaken our fellow-citizens from their infatuation to a proper sense of justice, and to the true interest of their country; and by proposing a system for the gradual emancipation of our slaves, at once to form a rallying point for its friends, who enlightened by your wisdom and experience, and supported and encouraged by your sanction and patronage, might look forward to a propitious and happy result. Your time of life I had not considered as an obstacle to the undertaking. Doctor Franklin, to whom, by the way, Pennsylvania owes her early riddance of the evils of slavery, was as actively and as usefully employed on

as arduous duties after he had past your age as he had ever been at any period of his life.

With apologizing for having given you so much trouble on this subject, and again repeating my thanks for the respectful and flattering attention you have been pleased to pay to it, I renew the assurances of the great respect and regard which makes me most sincerely yours

EDWARD COLES.

During the time that Mr. Coles was the private secretary of Mr. Madison, an intimate friendship seems to have sprung up between him and Nicholas Biddle, afterward president of the United States Bank, and whose name subsequently cut such a figure in our history. Mr. Coles and Mr. Biddle maintained for many years a friendly and voluminous correspondence. I have a large number of private letters of Mr. Biddle to Mr. Coles, the first dated in 1813. They are a model of epistolary correspondence.

Mr. Biddle was a member of the Pennsylvania State Senate in 1814 and '15, and letters written by him at that time to Mr. Coles have a certain political interest, even at this day:

Letter of Mr. Biddle to Mr. Coles.

HARRISBURG, Jan'y 17, 1815.

My Dear Coles:—Your last letter followed me to Harrisburg, and I am both ashamed and sorry not to

have answered it sooner, as I might thus have had another letter from you.

I have been bearing my misfortunes here very philosophically and filling my time with all the grave, dull matters which occupy us. Among other things, I proposed the other day a draft of 8 or 9 thousand men to serve for a year—a measure which in six weeks would have given us a fine army. By dint of hard speaking it was carried thro' the Senate by a vote of 21 to 9, but in the H. of R. the name of conscription is given to it; and as that horrible name, which has frightened all the old women, both in petticoats and pantaloons, is as fatal as a mad dog, the bill will be lost. Such is the infatuation of party that my political friends are quite astonished at my having any concern in such a diabolical affair; and altho' the bill is almost a copy of an old act of Assembly in 1781, with much milder provisions, still there are many worthy persons who think that the bill is the work of Bonaparte. We shall next resort to a project of raising regular troops by voluntary enlistment, and if we can first raise the money for bounties, then the men, in some months from this, after the capture of Phil[a] perhaps we shall be prepared with a most reasonable supply of men.

But here, as in Congress, there seems to be a lamentable want of that energy which the crisis requires. Unless your Congress acts with more propriety they will be abandoned by those who have hitherto been their warmest supporters. Only a short time ago, a leading member of *your* party told me of his intention of submitting resolutions censuring the tardiness of the honorable Congress—and I, so little of a promoter of mischief among you politicians, that I dissuaded him from it, as exibiting an appearance of divisions which might be

injurious, so let the Congressmen look to it. What is this languid, miserable disease that afflicts Congress? There seems to be neither energy, talent, nor anything else among your majority. For God's sake, try to animate them to something generous and energetic. Mr. Monroe and Mr. Dallas must be provoked beyond measure at the course of affairs. How does the latter come on? I have heard that he is not very popular at Washington.

I have just heard from Mrs. Biddle, who is in good health, and from Craig, who amuses himself as much as ever. Will you not visis us this winter? I have been such a politician that I have not visited Phil^a but once, and for a few days, since first I came here.

God bless you,

Aff'y y'rs,

NICHOLAS BIDDLE.

Letter from Mr. Biddle to Mr. Coles.

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 19, 1815.

My Dear Sir:—I give you joy most cordially of the glorious pacification which I have just been reading. We are in truth a most favored and happy nation. To have carried on triumphantly a war so unequal and inauspicious, and now when our forces began to fail and our means were almost exhausted, to be thus blessed with peace on honorable terms, is an abundance of good fortune which we had no right to expect. I rejoice at it with all my heart. God knows it was time for us to make peace, for between the Yankees and the Congress our affairs have been managed most sadly. If things had gone on thus much longer, I should have begun to pray for some Cromwell from the Navy Yard (that is the Navy Yard that was,) to clear the Hall of the Repre-

sentatives and send them home. But now these good tidings put one in so pleasant a temper that we can forget all that has passed and look forward to the peaceful prosperity which awaits us.

I have come down rather unexpectedly, in consequence of a slight indisposition of Mrs. Biddle. She is much better. She is reading by my side, and desires to be remembered very kindly to you. Craig has just left us to go to Mr. Kentzow's. In a day or two I shall return to my den and make speeches. Fortunately the States have lost all their importance since the peace, and hereafter we shall content ourselves with making roads and fish-dams. This winter's campaign has not made me exceedingly enamored of senatorial dignity. It is very dull and stupid, and the only good thing I wished to do in the military way has so astonished all my orthodox political friends, that I run some risk of being damned at least, if not burned, for a heretic. These things do not affect me much. When a man takes the trouble of passing the winter in a vile country town, he should at least have the privilege of doing as he pleases. Shall we not see you when Congress adjourns? Now you have carried the treaties of England and of the Creeks, and put us at peace with the world, you might find leisure for a visit. We shall all be very glad to see you again.

Affect'y and Sincerely Y'rs,

N. BIDDLE.

Letter of Mr. Biddle to Mr. Coles.

Feb'y 25, 1818.

PHILADELPHIA.

My dear Coles:—I have had the pleasure of receiving your letter of the 18th, and must beg you to receive my

thanks for the friendly interest you have taken in what concerns me.

With regard to the first subject of your letter, the information, altho' such as I anticipated, is still of some importance. Whilst the rumors in relation to myself were so widely circulated, however destitute of foundation I knew them to be, I could not remain totally insensible to them in deciding upon my course of life for the next few years. I am therefore glad to know distinctly how that matter stands. No person in the country would, I hope, be less disposed than myself to advance anything like a pretension to any place whatever. I certainly could not suppose that the President would suffer his personal regard for me to outweigh the obvious considerations connected with appointments of that sort—and the only anxiety I feel, is that in ascertaining the matter of fact, there was no appearance of an expression of a wish on my part. I rely very implicitly on your judgment, that nothing of that sort could be conjectured from the manner in which the subject was presented. How great that reliance is you need not be told, since you are the only person to whom the subject was or will be mentiened.

I have not as yet decided on the course which I may pursue for some time to come. With my habits the career of a public man is not without attractions. My experience of the last few years however, has not, I confess, strengthened my early predeliction for that mode of life. Perhaps I begin to feel a decay of that vigorous ambition which some years ago would have carried me thro' every scene of public trouble, and given an animated interest to every public transaction. Perhaps I have lived too easily and too happily. Whatever be the cause, it is very certain that I feel no desire to resume a legislative sta-

tion—and if the question were now proposed, I think that after balancing the hopes of usefulness to the country, and of personal distinction against the disagreeable things inseparable from that sort of life, I should decline an election to Congress. It is not improbable from the present situation of the District, that if I were disposed to use any exertion, I should have a reasonable chance of success. Whether, however, success be worth the attempt is the question at present. To go to Congress would probably interfere moreover with a project about which we have talked a great deal—of spending some years in Europe. The time when we shall go must depend in a great degree on the situation of my family, but I feel some reluctance in contracting an engagement which might prevent that object. After all the decision of these things must be left to the course of events.

We have no news worth communicating to one who is drinking at the fountain-head.

The town is gay, and likely to continue so for some time. Among my regrets at not being here when you first came, one of the strongest is my not having had an opportunity of making you see and know Joseph Bonaparte. I have lately seen a good deal of him, and really he is by far the most interesting stranger I have seen in this country. He is free and communicative, and talks of all the great events and the great persons of his day with a frankness which assures one of his good nature as well as of his veracity. I am going to dine with him as soon as I finish this letter.

Mrs. Biddle desires to be particularly remembered to you, and bids me to warn you against the shepherdesses of the Illinois. Write to me before you leave Washington, and believe me always very aff't'y y'rs,

NICHOLAS BIDDLE.

Letter from Mr. Biddle to Mr. Coles.

HARRISBURG, March 11, 1815.

My Dear Sir:—I thank you kindly for your note in relation to my brother; I do not, however, perceive in the papers that the nominations are confirmed.

I send you a report on subject of the Hartford amendments; I drew it up as well because I think those amendments injudicious as because I was desirous of preventing the adoption of another report abusing the New England people. So many delusions have been propagated on the subject, that I thought it might be of service to make a moderate and candid statement—and this the more readily because we in Pennsylvania seem to be the natural mediators between you Southern people and the wise men of the East. I do not ask you to read so long a story, unless on some rainy day when you are in Albemarle and have nothing else to do.

This is the last evening we shall be in session, and I write in the midst of the tumult of business which you know is crowded into the few last hours of the existence of a legislative body. I did not tell you that Mrs. Biddle, tired of my absence, has come to stay with me, and is now here. Shall we not see you this summer? Now that war and all its troubles are over, you are entitled to some recreation.

Sincerely and aff'y y'rs,

N. BIDDLE.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. COLES RESOLVES TO SELL HIS PLANTATION IN VIRGINIA AND LIBERATE HIS SLAVES; RESIGNS AS PRIVATE SECRETARY TO MR. MADISON, IN 1815; VISITS THE NORTH-WESTERN TERRITORY; EXTENDS HIS JOURNEY TO KASKASKIA AND ST. LOUIS; ON HIS RETURN, MR. MADISON SENDS HIM ON A MISSION TO RUSSIA; HIS REMOVAL TO THE NORTH-WEST DELAYED; THE SUCCESS OF HIS MISSION; COUNTRIES ON THE CONTINENT AND GREAT BRITAIN VISITED.

IN 1814, after the conclusion of peace with Great Britain, Mr. Coles thought himself enabled to remove the obstacles in his way to selling his plantation and to leave the State and liberate his slaves. Accordingly in the following year, 1815, he resigned his position as private secretary, and spent a portion of the following autumn in exploring the North-western territory, for the purpose of finding a location and purchasing land on which to settle his negroes. This trip was made with a horse and buggy, having with him also a servant and a saddle-horse. It was thus that he travelled through many parts of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, and then crossed the Mississippi to Missouri. He reached St. Louis, then a little French village, and now become so great and prosperous a city, in October of that year (1815), by way of Shawneetown and

Kaskaskia, and which could then boast of but one brick house. Sending his servant back with one of his horses to Virginia, Mr. Coles descended the Mississippi to New Orleans, and thence went by sea to Savannah, Georgia. From thence he pushed his way to Charleston, and from there to his home at Enniscorthy.

It was at this time that there arose a serious misunderstanding between our government and Russia. The Emperor had considered himself purposely insulted by our government, and had threatened to expel or imprison our consul at St. Petersburg, who was then acting as our Charge d'Affaires in the absence of the Minister. William Pinkney, of Maryland, had been appointed minister to Russia on the 7th of March, 1816, but he was then at Naples, detained on public business. It was feared that he would find difficulty in reaching St. Petersburg, if not prevented going there at all. Mr. Pinkney, holding already the appointment of Minister, another one could not be sent. Mr. Madison, therefore, looked around for some able and discreet person whom he could send to Russia to smooth over the difficulties. Mr. Coles had lately been his private secretary, a member of his own family, and who enjoyed his fullest confi-

dence. He therefore selected him for this very delicate and important mission. Although Mr. Coles' arrangements had already been made to settle in Illinois, he was so strongly urged by Mr. Madison to undertake the mission, that he consented to do so. To emphasize it, Mr. Coles was sent to Russia on a man-of-war, the "Prometheus," Captain Wadsworth. She sailed from Boston in the summer of 1816. The "Prometheus" was the first vessel of our navy which had ever sailed up the Baltic. Mr. Coles remained some three months at St. Petersburg awaiting the return of Emperor Alexander, who was then on a visit to Moscow and Poland. On the return of the Emperor the difficulties were, upon the explanations of Mr. Coles, most happily adjusted. The troubles grew out of matters connected with the Russian Minister at Washington, Dashkoff; and the Emperor, to signify to the United States his disposition, after a knowledge of all the facts, offered to inflict any punishment on the offending Minister which the President of the United States might desire, and threatened to send him to Siberia. Mr. Coles very properly replied that our government had no suggestion to make in regard to any punishment of the offending Minister, but merely

wished to have him recalled, which was promptly done.

The "Prometheus" did not remain to bring Mr. Coles back to the United States. After concluding his diplomatic business, he made a journey in his private carriage from St. Petersburg to Berlin. The fact that he had been sent in a diplomatic capacity to Russia in an American man-of-war, and the complete success of his mission, gave him the entree into diplomatic and official circles wherever he went in Europe. He was presented in his diplomatic capacity to Louis XVIII, of France, by Mr. Gallatin, United States Minister at that time. At a dinner at Mr. Gallatin's on the same day, he met for the first time General La Fayette. Their mutual acquaintance with Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and many other men of the revolutionary times, procured for Mr. Coles an exceedingly cordial reception, and led to his being much in the company of La Fayette during his stay in Paris.

After three months sojourn in Paris, Mr. Coles passed over to England, where he spent many weeks in London, and then making a tour through England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, he sailed from Liverpool for New York.

The following is the letter offering this mission to Mr. Coles. The *fac-simile* is presented:

[Confidential.]

MONTPELIER, July 7, 1816.

Dear Sir:—Circumstances have arisen which make it expedient to forward communications to St. Petersburg by a special hand. Would the trip be agreeable to you? You probably know the allowance usual on such occasions. It is I *believe* $6 a day, the outward and return passage provided by the public, the expenses on shore borne by the party himself. Unless a direct opportunity can be promptly found, it is probable that the course will be via England. Should you think favorably of the proposition, it may be well to ascertain by letter to Mr. Monroe, who is still at Washington all the particulars, which may be interesting to you, among others the precise amount of the allowance, and the probable time when your departure will be required. Whether your decision be in the affirmative or negative, be so good as to let me know it as soon as you can.

Accept my cordial regards,

JAMES MADISON.

E. COLES, Esq.

Mr. Monroe, who was at the time Secretary of State, gave the following letter of introduction to Mr. Coles to the consul of the United States to St. Petersburg, it is also presented in *fac-simile:*

DEP'T OF STATE,
Aug't 6, 1816.

Sir:—The bearer, Mr. Coles, is sent to Russia on business of importance with our minister there. He was lately the private secretary of the President, and is a very respectable and amiable young man. This is to in-

Confidential

Montpelier July 7. 1816

Dear Sir

Circumstances have arisen which make it expedient to forward communications to St. Petersburg by a special hand. Would the trip be agreeable to you? You

James Madison

Dept. of State
May 6. 1866

Sir

troduce him to your acquaintance, and request your attention to him while at the post where you reside.

With great respect, I am, sir, y'r very ob't servant,

JAS. MONROE,

To the Consul of the U. States at St. Petersburg, and at other ports in Europe.

CHAPTER V.

MR. COLES REMOVES FROM VIRGINIA TO EDWARDSVILLE, ILLINOIS, WITH ALL HIS NEGROES, IN THE SPRING OF 1819; WAS AT KASKASKIA IN 1818; LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FROM PRESIDENT MONROE TO GOV. EDWARDS; THE CONDUCT OF MR. COLES IN REGARD TO HIS SLAVES; DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF FREEING THEM; JOURNEY TO ILLINOIS; VOYAGE DOWN THE OHIO RIVER. MR. COLES GIVES ALL HIS SLAVES THEIR FREEDOM; A REMARKABLE SCENE.

IN the spring of 1819, all his preparations having been completed, he made a final removal with all his negroes from Virginia to Edwardsville, in this State. The first appearance of Mr. Coles in Illinois, except as he passed through the territory from Shawneetown to St. Louis, in 1815, was in in the summer of 1818, at Kaskaskia, then the seat of government for the Territory of Illinois. A convention was then in session to form a constitution for the new State of Illinois. Mr. Coles had before this time determined, and for reasons which appear in this Paper, to remove from his native State of Virginia to Illinois. It was for this reason that he became much interested in the work of the convention at Kaskaskia, where he tarried several weeks to use what influence he might have to pre-

vent any recognition of slavery in the constitution of the State which he desired to make his home.

Mr. Coles was the bearer of the following letter of introduction to Hon. Ninian Edwards:

WASHINGTON, April 13, 1818.

Dear Sir:—Mr. Edward Coles, intending to pass through Illinois, probably to remain some time there, I take much pleasure in introducing him to your acquaintance and kind attention. I have long known and highly respected him for his excellent qualities and good understanding. He was, several years, private secretary of the late President, and employed by him as a confidential messenger to Russia, in which trusts he discovered sound judgment, great industry and fidelity, and is generally loved by those who know him best. Should he settle with you, you will find him a very useful acquisition—and I understand that is not an improbable event.

I hope that the arrangement made this winter will avail our country of your services, in the proposed treaty with the Indians, in a manner satisfactory to yourself; for success, on just principles, is the object of my most ardent wishes.

With great respect and esteem,

I am, dear sir, very sincerely yours,

JAMES MONROE.

HON. NINIAN EDWARDS.

I know of nothing more creditable to the character and action of Mr. Coles than his conduct in relation to his slaves. That conduct will honor his name and memory. Born amidst slavery and

among slaveholders, who had given the best features possible to that dreadful institution, and amid the luxury and refinement of the highest type of Virginia life, in silence and after long reflection, he formed the most distinctive and radical ideas on the subject of slavery. He then made the resolution in his own mind not to hold as slaves the negroes left to him by his father. I quote from his own language in this regard: "I could not reconcile it to my conscience and sense of propriety to participate in slavery; and being unable to screen myself under such a shelter, from the peltings and upbraidings of my own conscience, and the just censure, as I conceived, of earth and heaven, I could not consent to hold as property what I had no right to, and which was not and could not be property according to my understanding of the rights and duties of man—and therefore I determined that I would not and could not hold my fellow man as a slave."

But when Mr. Coles came to the point, he was met by great and almost insurmountable difficulties in manumitting his slaves. All his relations and friends were slaveholders and the example which he proposed to set would not only be an injury to them pecuniarily, but a reflection upon them as

slaveholders, and would render him unpopular and odious. Independent of these considerations, the law of Virginia required, under penalty of forfeiting his freedom, that every negro should leave the State within one year after he should be emancipated.

Most men would have shrunk from what Mr. Coles then had in contemplation. He had been born and educated in wealth and luxury, and was apparently surrounded by all that could make a man happy and contented in life. But the hideous pall of slavery was over it all. He had been for six years in the charming household of Mr. Madison as his private secretary; had been sent abroad under peculiar circumstances on a semi-diplomatic mission; had travelled in Europe, and been associated with many of its most distinguished men. Mr. Coles, however, was equal to what he had proposed to himself. On the 1st of April, 1819, he started from his plantation ("Rockfish") with all his negroes, and all their offspring, which he had inherited, for Illinois, except two old women, too old and infirm to support themselves, who remained in Virginia, but were supported by him during their lives. While the negroes knew that they were leaving the land of their birth and going

to the North-western territory, they knew nothing of the intentions which Mr. Coles had in regard to them. But they followed with unfaltering faith the man who had been so kind and indulgent a master. The party of slaves were put in charge of one of their number, a mulatto man named Ralph Crawford, who had accompanied Mr. Coles on one of his trips to Illinois. It was a long journey in emigrant wagons over the Alleghanies to Brownsville, Pennsylvania. Mr. Coles started a few days afterwards on horseback, and overtook them one day's journey from Brownsville. At this place he bought two flat-bottomed boats, upon which he embarked himself and his traveling companion, a Mr. Green, of Virginia, together with all his negroes, horses, wagons, etc. The pilot that he had employed proved so drunken and worthless that he was obliged to discharge him at Pittsburg. From thence, constituting himself captain and pilot, they proceeded on their voyage down the Ohio river for more than six hundred miles, to a point below Louisville. There the boats were sold, and Ralph Crawford again took charge of his party, and continued the journey by land to Edwardsville, Illinois, where they arrived safe and well.

I will now let Mr. Coles himself describe a scene which must awaken deepest emotions in every generous heart. I copy from a manuscript in his own handwriting, which I have had in my hands, and which has never yet been published:

"The morning after we left Pittsburg, a mild, calm and lovely April day, the sun shining bright, and the heavens without a cloud, our boats floating gently down the beautiful Ohio, the verdant foliage of Spring just budding out on its picturesque banks, all around presenting a scene both conducive to and in harmony with the finest feelings of our nature, was selected as one well suited to make known to my negroes the glad tidings of their freedom. Being curious to see the effect of an instantaneous severing of the manacles of bondage, and letting loose on the buoyant wings of liberty the long pent up spirit of man, I called on the deck of the boats, which were lashed together, all the negroes, and made them a short address, in which I commenced by saying it was time for me to make known to them what I intended to do with them, and concluded my remarks by so expressing myself, that by a turn of a sentence, I proclaimed in the shortest and fullest manner possible, that they were no longer slaves, but free—free as I was, and were at liberty to proceed with me, or to go ashore at their pleasure.

The effect on them was electrical. They stared at me and at each other, as if doubting the accuracy or reality of what they heard. In breathless silence they stood before me, unable to utter a word, but with countenances beaming with expression which no words could convey, and which no language can now describe. As they began to see the

truth of what they had heard, and to realize their situation, there came on a kind of hysterical, giggling laugh. After a pause of intense an unutterable emotion, bathed in tears, and with tremulous voices, they gave vent to their gratitude, and implored the blessings of God on me. When they had in some degree recovered the command of themselves, Ralph said he had long known I was opposed to holding black people as slaves, and thought it probable I would some time or other give my people their freedom, but that he did not expect me to do it so soon; and moreover, he thought I ought not to do it till they had repaid me the expense I had been at in removing them from Virginia, and had improved my farm and "gotten me well fixed in that new country." To this, all simultaneously expressed their concurrence, and their desire to remain with me, as my servants, until they had comfortably fixed me at my new home.

I told them, no. I had made up my mind to give to them immediate and unconditional freedom; that I had long been anxious to do it, but had been prevented by the delays, first in selling my property in Virginia, and then in collecting the money, and by other circumstances. That in consideration of this delay, and as a reward for their past services, as well as a stimulant to their future exertions, and with a hope it would add to their self esteem and their standing in the estimation of others, I should give to each head of a family a quarter section, containing one hundred and sixty acres of land. To this all objected, saying I had done enough for them in giving them their freedom; and insisted on my keeping the land to supply my own wants, and added, in the kindest manner, the expression of their solicitude that I would not have the means of doing so after I had freed them. I told them I had thought much of my duty and

of their rights, and that it was due alike to both that I should do what I had said I should do; and accordingly, soon after reaching Edwardsville, I executed and delivered to them deeds to the lands promised them.

I stated to them that the lands I intended to give them were unimproved lands, and as they would not have the means of making the necessary improvements, of stocking their farms, and procuring the materials for at once living on them, they would have to hire themselves out till they could acquire by their labor the necessary means to commence cultivating and residing on their own lands. That I was willing to hire and employ on my farm a certain number of them (designating the individuals;) the others I advised to seek employment in St. Louis, Edwardsville, and other places, where smart, active young men and women could obtain much higher wages than they could on farms. At this some of them murmured, as it indicated a partiality they said, on my part to those designated to live with me; and contended they should all be equally dear to me, and that I ought not to keep a part and turn the others out on the world, to be badly treated, etc. I reminded them of what they seemed to have lost sight of, that they were free; that no one had a right to beat or ill use them; and if so treated, they could at pleasure leave one place and seek a better; that labor was much in demand in that new country, and highly paid for; that there would be no difficulty in their obtaining good places, and being kindly treated; but if not, I should be at hand, and would see they were well treated, and have justice done them.

I availed myself of the deck scene to give the negroes some advice. I dwelt long and with much earnestness on their future conduct and success, and my great anxiety that they should behave themselves and do well, not

only for their own sakes, but for the sake of the black race held in bondage; many of whom were thus held, because their masters believed they were incompetent to take care of themselves, and that liberty would be to them a curse rather than a blessing. My anxious wish was that they should so conduct themselves as to show by their example that the descendants of Africa were competent to take care of and govern themselves, and enjoy all the blessings of liberty, and all the other birthrights of man, and thus promote the universal emancipation of that unfortunate and outraged race of the human family."

On board of the boat and before the party landed, Mr. Coles gave to the negroes a general certificate of freedom in which their names, ages, etc., were stated. It appeared, however, that at the last session of the Legislature of Illinois, a law had been passed, but which had not then been published, requiring every free negro to have the evidence of his freedom; and unless he possessed such evidence and had it recorded, he was liable to be imprisoned, and any one hiring him was subject to a heavy fine for each day he should employ him. In consequence of the passage of this law, he was advised that it would be necessary for him to give to each negro or family a certificate of freedom, in which the individual or individuals should be named and described, the same to be made a matter of record, and that the shortest and best mode

would be for him to execute separate instruments of emancipation. Mr. Coles at first objected to this, for the reason that he had already given to the negroes a general certificate of freedom before they had come into the State. His lawyer, the Hon. Daniel P. Cook, afterwards so distinguished as a member of Congress, advised him that it would be better for carrying out, in the shortest and best form the provisions of the law, and protecting the negroes, as well as those who should employ them, he should give them separate papers. In accordance with that advice, on the 4th of July, 1819, he executed instruments of emancipation to all the negroes who were then residing in Illinois. He prefaced the instrument by setting forth that his father had bequeathed to him certain negro slaves and adding these great words: "Not believing that man can have of right a property in his fellow man, but on the contrary, that all mankind were endowed by nature with equal rights, I do therefore, by these presents restore to (naming the party) that inalienable liberty of which he has been deprived." That certificate formed the basis of a long and bitter law-suit, which will be alluded to farther on.

CHAPTER VI.

APPOINTED REGISTER OF THE LAND OFFICE AT EDWARDSVILLE, BY MR. MONROE, IN 1819; THE ADVANTAGES OF THAT POSITION; MAKES ACQUAINTANCE OF THE PEOPLE; PERSONAL APPEARANCE; IMPRESSION MADE ON THE PIONEERS OF THE COUNTRY; GOV. COLES AND GOV. EDWARDS, BOTH THE HIGHEST TYPES OF GENTLEMEN; THE SECOND ELECTION FOR GOVERNOR IN 1822; A STUMP CANVASS; COLES ELECTED BY A SMALL PLURALITY OVER CHIEF JUSTICE PHILLIPS; COLES, ANTI-SLAVERY, SUCCESSFUL ONLY THROUGH DIVISION OF THE OPPOSING PARTY; LEGISLATURE LARGELY PRO-SLAVERY; LIST OF MEMBERS.

MR. COLES having made known his determination to settle in Illinois, on March 5, 1819, Mr. Monroe conferred upon him the appointment of Registrar of the Land Office at Edwardsville, which was at that time one of the principal land offices in the State. This appointment was a most fortunate one for Mr. Coles, as it enabled him to make acquaintances over a large part of the State then settled, and to reach that position which made it possible for him in so great a measure to shape its future destiny. There were no positions in the new States in which the public lands were situated, so favorable for forming acquaintances, and making political capital as those of land officers. Settlers from every part of the land districts were obliged to go to

the place where the land office was located, to enter their lands and secure their homes. To enable themselves to accomplish this purpose and acquire the means to enter their lands, had cost the settlers great labor and many privations. It was the ambition and hope of their lives to get a title to their homes, and there was no man who was not without anxiety that something might not turn up to thwart his purpose, and many thought that the land officers held their destinies, in some measure, in their hands. When the settler reached Edwardsville, dressed in jeans and wearing moccasins, with his money in his belt, having traveled on foot or on horseback long distances, and first presented himself to the Register of the Land Office, there he found Edward Coles, who had recently emigrated into the State from Virginia. It was known to some of them that he had been the private secretary for President Madison, and had been on an important mission to Europe.

They found him a young man of handsome, but somewhat awkward personal appearance, genteelly dressed, and of kind and agreeable manners. The anxious settler was at once put at ease by the suavity of his address, the interest he appeared to feel in aiding him, and the thoroughly intelligent manner

in which he discharged his duty. No man went away who was not delighted with his intercourse with the "Register." And herein is illustrated the great mistake so often made by politicians and candidates for popular favor. Too many candidates for the suffrage of the people in our early political contests thought it necessary, in order to make themselves popular, to affect slovenly and unclean dress and vulgar manners in their campaigns. There was never a greater mistake. However rough, ill clothed and unintelligent the voter might be, he always preferred to vote for the man who was dressed and acted like a gentleman to the one who dressed like and acted like himself. This was particularly apparent in the case of Governor Edwards, who was, perhaps, the most successful political canvasser of his day in the State. In his canvasses before the people he never descended to the ordinary tricks and subterfuges of the lower grade of politicians running for office. He showed himself as the highest type of a well dressed and polished gentleman. Always riding in his own carriage and driven by his negro servant, the people thought it an honor to vote for such a gentleman. And as it was with Governor Edwards, so it was with his immediate predecessor, Governor Coles.

Such were his dignified manners and gentlemanly deportment under all circumstances and upon all occasions, that he was always respected.

The election for Governor of the State, to succeed Governor Bond, took place in August, 1822. There were no political conventions in those days to nominate candidates, and the different aspirants for elective offices went in on their own hook, or, in the language of the day, "run stump." There were no distinctive political parties at that time, and no great national questions occupied the attention of the people. Governor Bond being ineligible for re-election was not a candidate. The most prominent man brought out for Governor in this contest was Joseph Phillips, then Chief Justice of the State. His prominent supporters were among the early settlers, particularly from the slave-holding States, and though the matter was not particularly agitated, holding extreme views on the slavery question. Mr. Coles, who had only been three years in the State, was brought forward by a class of men who had no sympathy with the Phillips party—men who had known Coles as Register of the Land Office, and who admired and respected his character. At the commencement of the contest these were the principal candidates. As the

canvass advanced, Coles developed strength in the south-eastern part of the State, along the Wabash, which alarmed the Phillips men, and to take away votes from Coles they brought out as a candidate, Thomas C. Browne, then an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, who was supposed to have great strength in that part of the State. Both Phillips and Browne were pronounced pro-slavery men, while Coles was known to be anti-slavery. There were then three candidates—Phillips, Coles and Browne. Afterwards there appeared a fourth, and for what reason I have never seen explained, in the person of Major General James B. Moore, of the State Militia. This was a somewhat extraordinary contest, and Coles was elected by a plurality of only fifty votes over Phillips. Coles had two thousand eight hundred and ten votes; Phillips, two thousand seven hundred and sixty votes; Browne, two thousand five hundred and forty-three; and Moore, five hundred and twenty-two votes. While Browne was brought out to help Phillips in the Wabash country, the result shows that it was his candidacy that beat Phillips. A large majority of the votes given to Browne would undoubtedly have been given to Phillips had not Browne been a candidate. Browne had only two

hundred and seventeen votes less than Phillips. The aggregate vote of Coles and General Moore was three thousand three hundred and thirty-two. That might be considered the vote of those opposed to bringing slavery into the State, while Phillips and Browne, in favor of introducing slavery into the State, had a total vote of five thousand three hundred and three. Personal considerations entered to some extent into this contest, but if this vote would be considered a criterion on the slavery question, it would show a majority of one thousand nine hundred and seventy-one votes in favor of introducing slavery into the State by virtue of an amended constitution.

It will have been seen, therefore, that Mr. Coles was elected Governor by a large minority of the whole vote cast, and through the division of the pro-slavery men. At this same election, and where there was no such division, the pro-slavery men elected their candidate for Lieutenant-Governor, Adolphus Frederick Hubbard, by a decided majority, as well as a majority in both branches of the Legislature, and strongly opposed to Governor Coles.

The following is the list of Senators and Mem-

members of the House of Representatives, composing the Legislature of 1822–3:

☞Those marked with an asterisk voted against the Convention Resolution.

SENATORS.

ADOLPHUS F. HUBBARD, Lieut.-Governor and Presiding Officer.
THOMAS LIPPINCOTT, Secretary.

Sangamon....Stephen Stillman.*
Madison...Theophilus W. Smith.
Washington..Andrew Bankson.*
Union and Alexander, John Grammar.
Crawford, Clark, and Edgar, Daniel Parker.*
Hamilton, Jefferson, and Marion, Thomas Sloo, Jr.
Bond, Fayette, and Montgomery, Martin Jones.
Jackson.....William Boon.
Randolph.....Samuel Crozier.
Wayne and Lawrence, William Kinkade.*
*Green, Morgan, etc.*Geo.Cadwell.*
White.....Leonard White.
Edwards.....Robert Frazier.*
Johnson and Franklin, Milton Ladd.
St. Clair.....William Kinney.
Monroe.....Joseph A. Beaird.
Gallatin.....Michael Jones.
Pope.....Lewis Barker.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WILLIAM M. ALEXANDER, of Alexander, Speaker.
CHARLES DUNN, Clerk.

Monroe.....William Alexander.
Pope..... Samuel Alexander, James A. Whiteside.
Madison.....Curtiss Blakeman,* George Churchill,* Emanuel J. West.
Fayette and Montgomery, Wm. Berry.
Lawrence.....Abraham Cairnes.*
Hamilton, Jefferson, and Marion, Zadock Casey.
Franklin.....Thomas Dorris.
Gallatin.... J. G. Daimwood, James S. Davenport.
White.....John Emmitt, Alexander Phillips, G. R. Logan.
Crawford.....David McGahey,* R. C. Ford.
Union.....Alexander P. Field, John McIntosh.
Johnson....William McFatridge.
Pike and Fulton, Nicholas Hansen.†
Clark and Edgar, Wm. Lowrey.*
St. Clair.....Risdon Moore,* Jacob Ogle,* James Trotier.
Randolph.....Thomas Mather,* Raphael Widen,* John McFerron.
Bond.....Jna. H. Pugh.*
Edwards.....Gilbert T. Pell.*
Green and Morgan, Thos. Kattan.
Washington.....James Turney.
Jackson..... Conrad Will.
Sangamon.....James Sims.*
Wayne.....James Campbell.

† Shaw, substituted for Hansen, voted for the Convention Resolution.

CHAPTER VII.

INAUGURATED AS GOVERNOR, DECEMBER, 1822; HIS "SPEECH" ON THE OCCASION; SOUND VIEWS ON THE CURRENCY QUESTION; BOLD DENUNCIATION OF SLAVERY, THE BLACK LAWS OF THE STATE, AND OF KIDNAPPING; LETTER IN REGARD TO THE TITLE OF HIS OFFICE; THE EFFECT OF THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH; THE OPENING UP OF THE GREAT QUESTION OF MAKING ILLINOIS A SLAVE STATE; CHARACTER OF THE EMIGRATION FROM THE SLAVE STATES; INCENSED AT THE ELECTION OF GOVERNOR, COLES; PRO-SLAVERY MAJORITY IN BOTH BRANCHES OF THE LEGISLATURE; PLAN CONCEIVED TO MAKE A SLAVE CONSTITUTION.

THIS Legislature convened at Vandalia on the first Monday of December, 1822, and on the 5th day of that month Governor Coles delivered in person what is called a "Speech on his inauguration in the presence of both houses of the General Assembly of Illinois." No one who reads this "Speech," as it was called at that day, can but be struck with its elevated tone and the wisdom of its recommendations.* He spoke of the fluctuating and deranged state of

*Extract of a letter of Morris Birkbeck to Governor Coles, dated Wansborough, Dec. 21, 1822: "I should write to you even were it only for the pleasure of telling you that your speech has made a very favorable impression in this quarter, and is highly commended, both as to matter and composition. Judge Wattles, a New Yorker, a man of talents. says it reminds him of Governor Clinton in good sense and plainness. This, I believe, he considers the maximum of praise."

the circulating medium, and the mania for banking, which had brought its train of evils inseparable from its excesses. He said the State should profit by the experience of others that had adopted delusive measures in attempting to relieve the community from pecuniary embarrassments, the effect of which had been to increase the evils they were intended to remove. He enunciated the sentiment which now, after a lapse of more than fifty-eight years, in view of the prolonged and heated discussions on the theatre of national politics, must have a great interest. He continued:

"It behooves Illinois, which has been tempted to follow the example of her neighbors, to profit by their experience, and to restore, as soon as she can, the currency of the State to the fixed and universal standard of gold and silver, or what shall be equivalent to them; believing as she must that those are the great desiderata in a sound currency. A currency changeable in value can form no standard for the value of other things; and of course fails in its object, inasmuch as it is always operating injuriously and unjustly in the discharge of debts, by a greater or less amount, intrinsically, than was contracted for."

It was but a few days after his inauguration that Governor Coles wrote the following letter touching the title of his office. It illustrates the character of the man.

VANDALIA, Dec. 10, 1822.

Gentlemen:—Our State constitution gives to the person exercising the functions of the Executive, the appellation of *Governor*—a title which is specific, intelligible, and republican, and amply sufficient to denote the dignity of the office. In your last paper you have noticed me by the addition of "His Excellency," an aristocratic and high-sounding adjunct, which I am sorry to say has become too common among us, not only in newspaper annunciations, but in the addressing of letters, and even in familiar discourse. It is a practice disagreeable to my feelings, and inconsistent, as I think, with the dignified simplicity of freemen, and to the nature of the vocation of those to whom it is applied. And having made it a rule through life to address no one as His Excellency, or the Honorable, or by any such unmeaning title, I trust I shall be pardoned for asking it as a favor of you, and my fellow-citizens generally, not to apply them to me. I am, &c., &c.,

EDWARD COLES.

Messrs. Brown & Berry, Editors of the Illinois Intelligencer.

Governor Coles called the attention of the Legislature to the agricultural society of the State, and asked its consideration as to the propriety of affording it its countenance and support in effecting the great and praiseworthy object for which it was instituted. He dwelt on the advantages which would result from connecting by navigable channels the waters of the Mississippi with those of the

great northern lakes. He hoped that Illinois would not be backward in performing her part in that great national undertaking, which would connect the city of New York with New Orleans by an interior communication through the Hudson, the Lakes, and the Mississippi.

In this connection, the following letter to Governor Coles from DeWitt Clinton, the father of the canal system in this country, cannot fail to attract attention. A *fac-simile* is inserted.

ALBANY, 10 Oct. 1825.

Sir:—I regret that the rapidity of your progress through this place prevented me from seeing you, when I called at your lodgings the day after your arrival. Besides the pleasure which it would have afforded me, I would have availed myself of the opportunity of explaining my views on the subject of the Michigan and Illinois Canal.

The report of your Canal Board (of which you were so kind as to send me several copies) strikes me very favorably, and I think that it evinces much ability. You have a superabundance of water, easy ground for excavation, and if, instead of stone, you make wooden locks which will be found much cheaper, and, in some other respects, much better, the estimate of the expense may be reduced.

This communication between the lakes and the ocean has long been contemplated, and its creation might be profitable to enterprising capitalists. Owing to the present depression of the money market, it would not be a

Albany 10 October 1825

Sir

I regret that the rapidity of your progress through this place prevented me from seeing you, when I called at your lodgings, the day after your arrival. Besides the pleasure, which it would have afforded me, I would have availed myself of the [illegible] of [illegible]

Yours very truly

judicious time to operate, but as soon as this pressure is removed, and it cannot last long, I think that it would be well to make the experiment. And it will, I assure you, afford me high satisfaction to render all the aid in my power in favor of this important channel of communication.

I am, very respectfully,
Your most obed. servant,
DEWITT CLINTON.

GOVERNOR COLES.

But the emphatic part of the message of Governor Coles was that in relation to slavery, a subject always nearest to his heart. He declared that notwithstanding the ordinance of 1787, slavery still existed in the State, and he earnestly invoked the interposition of the Legislature in the cause of humanity. He strongly recommended that the Legislature make just and equitable provisions for the abrogation of slavery in the State. He declared that "justice and humanity required of us a general revisal of the laws relative to negroes, in order the better to adapt them to the character of our institutions and the situation of the country." He also recommended to the Legislature to enact more effective laws to prevent the kidnapping of free blacks, a crime which he was sorry to say was too often committed with impunity in the State.

This "Speech" to the Legislature by Governor

Coles, so far as regarded slavery, opened up a controversy of unheard of bitterness, and involving consequences to the State and to the Union which cannot be measured by human ken. A large majority of the inhabitants of Illinois at this time were from the slaveholding States. Many of them leaving their States because they were not able to hold slaves, and hoping to accomplish a state of things which would allow them to indulge in their cherished wish in the State in which they had made their homes, they were more ultra pro-slavery than the slave-holders of the States which they had left. Governor Coles, an anti-slavery man, had been elected by a minority vote, and by a division of the pro-slavery men. They saw that if their forces had been united, their candidate, Chief Justice Phillips, would have been elected Governor by a large majority. Notwithstanding they had lost their Governor, they elected decided majorities in both branches of the Legislature. Under these circumstances, as may well be conceived, the pro-slavery men now considered it their time to strike for a change in the constitution of the State.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EXISTENCE OF SLAVERY IN ILLINOIS; THE ORDINANCE OF 1787 CONTENDED NOT TO BE BINDING; A COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATURE REPORT IN FAVOR OF A CONVENTION TO ALTER THE CONSTITUTION; THE EARLY INHABITANTS OF THE STATE; PREJUDICE AGAINST THE "YANKEES"; INCIDENT RELATED BY CAPT. GEAR; JUDGE GILLESPIE'S STATEMENT OF THE SITUATION IN ILLINOIS AT THIS TIME; MANNER OF AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION; DIFFICULTY OF GETTING THE REQUISITE VOTE IN THE LOWER HOUSE; THE OBJECT TO BE ACCOMPLISHED AT ALL HAZARDS; THE PROJECT RESISTED IN THE LEGISLATURE; LOOSE PRACTICES IN THAT DAY IN THE "KINGDOM OF PIKE;" LETTER OF WM. P. MCKEE; REMINISCENCES OF JOHN SHAW; THE WHIG CELEBRATION AT GALENA IN 1840; JOHN S. MILLER AND JOHN SHAW; "TIP AND TY."

THE first constitution prohibited slavery, and it may well be asked how it was possible that a state of slavery could exist in Illinois at the time of which we are speaking. Illinois was slave territory before it was ceded by Virginia to the United States. The deed of cession from Virginia provided that "the inhabitants of the Territory ceded, who professed themselves to have been citizens of Virginia previous to the cession should have their possessions and titles confirmed to them, and be protected in their rights and liberties." This deed of cession was executed March 1st, 1784. It

was on the 13th of July, 1787, that Congress passed the ordinance which provided that there should be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, etc., in the Northwestern Territory. It was strenuously contended that this ordinance of 1787 was in conflict with the deed of cession, and therefore of no binding effect.

The first act of the Legislature was to appoint a committee on that portion of Governor Coles' message which referred to slavery. That committee reported in substance that at "the period when Illinois was admitted into the Union upon an equal footing with the original States in all respects whatever; and whatsoever causes of regret were experienced by the restrictions imposed upon the first convention, your committee are clearly of the opinion that the people of Illinois have now the same right to alter their constitution as the people of the State of Virginia, or any other of the original State, and may make any disposition of negro slaves they choose, without any breach of faith or violation of compact, ordinances, or acts of Congress; and if the reasoning employed be correct, there is no course left by which to accomplish the object of this portion of the Governor's message than to call a convention to alter the constitution."

The history of the attempt to fasten slavery on the State of Illinois is one of great interest to every citizen of the State.

The earliest inhabitants of Illinois were French Canadians and emigrants from Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina. The French Canadians had been slaveholders from the earliest times in the Territory, which afterwards was Illinois, and were favorable to the institution. The emigration from Kentucky was by far the best, Tennessee was below Kentucky and the North Carolina emigration was mostly the "poor whites." There was much ignorance and shiftlessness among many of them, combined with an intense prejudice against all people from the free States, whom they called "Yankees." Captain Gear, a very early settler of the southern part of the State, and who afterwards located at Galena, once told me of an incident he had witnessed in early times in Southern Illinois. Some man from a free State had been addressing a political meeting of these people on a certain occasion. He made an able and eloquent speech, but after its conclusion, its effect was entirely destroyed by some "Sucker" who succeeded him, making three jumps, and each time exclaiming, "I am a white man," "I am a white man," "I am a white man."

The following is Judge Gillespie's statement of the situation at the time

"It was conceded in those days that a State formed out of the "North West Territory" could not be *admitted* into the Union contrary to the provisions of the ordinance of 1787, which prohibited slavery, but the slavery propagandists contended that you could, the next day after being admitted under an *anti-slavery* constitution, change the constitution so as to admit slavery, and in that way, "whip the devil around the stump." It was likewise contended that slavery existed in Illinois beyond Congressional interference, by virtue of the treaty (of 1763) between France and England, and that between England and the United States at the close of the Revolutionary War, in both of which the rights of the French inhabitants were guaranteed. One of these rights was that of holding slaves, which, it was contended, was protected by treaty stipulation, and was equal in binding effect, to the Constitution (of the United States) itself. Besides, it was maintained, that by the conquest of George Rogers Clark, this country became a part of Virginia, and that Congress had no more power to abolish slavery in Illinois, than it had in Virginia. The logic of the times was that the French inhabitants had the right to hold slaves, and that the other inhabitants had equal rights with the French—ergo: they all had the right to hold slaves. This was the argument of the celebrated constitutional expounder—John Grammar, of Union county—in the Legislature, in reply to an intimation questioning the validity of the title of slaves in Illinois. The old gentleman instantly arose and remarked "that fittener men" than he was "mout hev been found to defend the masters agin the sneakin'

ways of the infernal abolitioners; but havin' rights on my side, I don't fear, Sir. I will show that are proposition is unconstitutionable, inlegal, and fornenst the compact. Don't every one know, or leastwise had ought to know, that the Congress that sot at *Post Vinsan*,* garnisheed to the old French inhabitants the right to their niggers, and haint I got as much rights as any Frenchman in this State? Answer me that, Sir." Notwithstanding this seeming confidence, these men were exceedingly desirous of reinforcing their rights. They resorted to the indenturing method, by which they got their servant to go before some officer and bind himself to serve the master, generally for ninety-nine years, for which he was to receive a slight equivalent at the end of each year.

As the "Yankees" increased in numbers, confidence (on the part of the pro-slavery men) in the titles to their negroes, diminished, and they finally concluded that there was no assurance for them, except in changing the constitution so as to sanction slave-holding; and thus the contest commenced, which for fierceness and rancor excelled anything ever before witnessed. The people were at the point of going to war with each other. The pro-slavery men were, as they have always been, ready to resort to violence wherever they dared, unwilling to listen to, or incapable of comprehending arguments. Their method of overcoming opposition was by 'bulldozing'; but on this occasion they had to encounter men of invincible courage, who were eager and willing to 'beard the lion in his den,' and defend their rights at all hazards. Many of these men had removed to Illinois to get rid of the curse of slavery."

*Vincennes was in early times called by the settlers of Indiana and Illinois "*Post Vinsan.*"

By a provision of the then existing constitution, no change thereof could be made unless the question of a convention to form a new constitution should be submitted to the people by a joint resolution of the Legislature, adopted, by a two-thirds vote. While the pro-slavery men had precisely two-thirds of the votes of the Senate, in the House, they lacked one vote of the requisite number.

The pro-slavery men showed themselves in this controversy, sprung unexpectedly upon the Legislature, vehement, determined, and unscrupulous. They considered their great object would be accomplished if they could only secure a call of the convention, for they believed that a majority of the people of the State were ripe for the introduction of slavery. Influenced by great convictions, loving freedom and hating slavery, the minority fought the question of the convention with a boldness and resolution worthy of the great cause in which they were engaged, though one or two men faltered in the struggle. There was a noisy, demonstrative, and aggressive public opinion at Vandalia at that time. Judges, prosecuting attorneys, county officers, men seeking office and special legislation at the hands of the pro-slavery Legis-

lature, were all howling for a "conventio ı." Denunciations and curses unlimited were visited upon Governor Coles, and upon that little band in the Legislature which had attempted to thwart the pro-slavery party in passing the convention resolution. But that object was to be accomplished at every cost, and without regard to the means to be employed. At almost the last moment, and when it was found that neither influence, nor threats, nor coaxing, would secure the requisite vote to pass the resolution, it was determined in order to accomplish the object that an anti-convention man should be put *out* of the House, and a convention man put *in* his place. Such a change would give the convention party precisely the two-thirds vote required. Nicholas Hansen had received the certificate of election as a member of the House from Pike county, which then embraced the whole central and northern part of the State. Hansen's competitor was John Shaw, one of the earliest settlers of Illinois, and who it is said was the very first settler on the "military tract." And here a digression for a single moment. I am myself a citizen of Illinois, old enough to have known John Shaw. The first time I ever saw him was in Galena, in July, 1840, where there was an immense political meeting, held by the

Whigs in the interest of "Tippecanoe and Tyler too." Shaw, I think, then lived at Hamburg, in Calhoun county, and owned and navigated a steamboat named the "John Shaw." This steamboat had been chartered by the Rock Island county Whigs, for the Whig gathering at Galena. The boat was a little behind time in arriving on the day of the meeting, and she was looked for with great anxiety by the crowd that expected her to bring great accessions to their numbers from Rock Island and the various towns on the Mississippi river. Coming slowly up Fever river, gaily dressed out with bunting, having a band of music on board, her arrival was hailed with the most intense enthusiasm by the Whigs on the levee; but the culmination of this enthusiasm was reached when a canoe named "Tip and Ty," was seen suspended over the boiler deck, in which was seated John Shaw and John S. Miller, one of the very earliest settlers of the lead mines, holding paddles in their hands, going through the pantomime of paddling "Tip and Ty." I never saw him afterwards until at Washington, during the session of Congress, 1855–6. He was there in the prosecution of some claim against the Government, and had then become quite an old man, and quite blind. He called to see me frequent-

ly. He was a short, spare man, of a quick and nervous movement, with a vivid recollection of the early incidents of the country, full of anecdote and reminiscence, and withal a quiet humor, which made his visits always pleasant and agreeable.

The historian of Pike county is not very complimentary to Shaw. He says, in substance, that Shaw was a very early settler at Coles' Grove, which was the county seat of Pike before Calhoun was set off from it, and was County Commissioner of Pike county before Calhoun was constituted. He was a noted man, ambitious, restless, unscrupulous and engaged in all sorts of business, and particularly in politics. At one time he had great sway over the community, and was called the "Black Prince," the name being given him on account of the control he had over a large number of "half breeds" in the county. "He forged deeds, even by the quire, doctored poll books, etc. So great was his influence, but at the same time so injurious to the settlers, that the public issue was gotten up in politics, of 'Shaw' and 'Anti-Shaw,' and it was not until a great and united struggle, that Shaw lost his supremacy." After this happened, Shaw left Pike county and the State, and moved to Wisconsin and became the first settler of "Shaw's Landing," now the city of Berlin, Wisconsin.

The contest between Hansen and Shaw, for members of the Legislature for Pike county, seems to have been a very lively one. I have a curious letter on the subject of this election, written to Governor Coles from Edwardsville, August 19th, 1822, and a few days after the election, by William P. McKee, who I believe, was a clerk in the Land Office under Mr. Coles, the then Register. I set the letter out herein, as an interesting item of that contest which was destined to take such proportions in the future. There seems to have been a warm time in the "Kingdom of Pike," and practices were resorted to at that early period, which have been too much in vogue at a later day.

EDWARDSVILLE, ILLINOIS, August 17, 1822.

Dear Sir:—Since your departure from this place, I have learned the state of the polls in several counties. Mr. Buckmaster returned from Kaskaskia, yesterday. He says that Lockwood told him that he had heard from all the counties but Crawford and White, exclusive of which, you had a majority over Phillips (who is now thought to have beaten Browne), of from two hundred and fifty to three hundred votes. There appears to exist no doubt now, but that you are elected. Mr. Warren *has given it up*, as you will see by his paper of this day, sent you to Albemarle. Mr. Cook, I presume, is doubtless re-elected. It is generally thought, I believe, that Hubbard is elected Lieutenant Governor. In our calculations made of the votes given for Governor, I

had not included your vote in Pike county, which was eighty-nine, consequently in the counties we had heard from before you left this, you had a majority over him of five hundred and fifty votes. In the "Kingdom of Pike," I presume, they had a warm time. Yesterday, a gentleman was from there who brought dispatches from Hansen and Smith to you and others of this place; he told me the contents and desired me to open it. I did so and found a very warm letter from Hansen to you, desiring those who have ever entertained a friendship for him not to despair of his prospects, etc.; and in which was a request that you should hand, for publication, a letter from Smith to you, which says that Shaw had obtained a great many of his votes from Greene, Madison and Missouri; and knowing the fidelity and correctness of the Judges appointed by the Commissioner's Court, he (Shaw) had thought fit to establish a mob poll, as he styles it, at which Shaw had received most all his votes; although Hansen was very anxious to have it appear in the paper of to-day, I have laid it away in the pigeon-hole and shall say nothing about it. He will be down Monday or Tuesday, he wrote you, when he can act for himself. Since you left this place, we have lost two citizens of our county, James Robinson (neighbor to mother) and General Hopkins, who will be buried to-day. Nothing of consequence has transpired in the office since you left.

* * * * * * * * *

Accept my wishes for your health and prosperity.

Yours with esteem,

WM. P. MCKEE."

CHAPTER IX.

CONTEST BETWEEN HANSEN AND SHAW IN THE LEGISLATURE; HISTORIANS AT FAULT IN REGARD TO ONE REASON FOR UNSEATING HANSEN; HIS VOTE FOR UNITED STATES SENATOR NOTHING TO DO WITH IT; CONFIRMED IN HIS SEAT AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE SESSION; SHAW'S VOTE NECESSARY; THE CRY OF "THE CONVENTION OR DEATH;" ALL DEBATE STIFLED; HANSEN VOTES AGAINST THE RESOLUTION; DETERMINATION TO OUST HIM FROM HIS SEAT; COL. ALEXANDER P. FIELD; HIS RESOLUTION ADMITTING HANSEN TO HIS SEAT RECONSIDERED, AND SHAW ADMITTED; HIS VOTE FOR THE RESOLUTION CARRIES IT; GEN. NICHOLAS HANSEN; LETTER OF GOV. COLES NOTIFYING HIM OF HIS APPOINTMENT AS JUDGE OF PROBATE OF PIKE COUNTY; HANSEN'S LETTER TO COLES.

HANSEN had the certificate of election, but when the Legislature met the first Monday of December, 1822, Shaw came forward to contest his seat. It is said by Governor Ford and Governor Reynolds, and others, that Hansen was permitted to occupy his seat for the purpose of giving his vote for the re-election of Jesse B. Thomas, as United States Senator, who was a pro-slavery man, and afterterwards turned out to put in Shaw who was a convention man. That does not appear to be the precise fact. The case of this contested election seems to have been decided on its merits and outside of the influence of any party feeling. It was at an early period of the session,

and before the question of a convention had been much agitated. The contest for Senator was a personal one, and the convention question was in nowise involved in it. Both candidates were pro-slavery men, and both became strong convention men. Thomas had the most strength and was elected over Judge John Reynolds. Hansen voted for Thomas, as between him and the other principal candidate, Reynolds, equally pro-slavery. I can find no sufficient evidence that Hansen was confirmed in his seat in the first instance, for the purpose of voting for Thomas. The only thing in that regard, which appears in all the proceedings, is a statement made in the debate in the house by Mr. Lowrey, of Clark, that he had heard Ford, of Crawford, a Thomas man, as well as a convention man afterwards, say that "*if Hansen were turned out Thomas would lose a vote,*" which was undoubtedly the case, but which proves nothing further than that Hansen preferred Thomas to Reynolds, both holding precisely the same views. This view of the matter is supported by the fact that anti-slavery and anti-convention men voted both for and against Hansen* in the case of his contest with Shaw.

* The election for Senator was held January 9th, 1823. Jesse B. Thomas received twenty-nine votes, John Reynolds, sixteen votes,

On the 2nd of December, 1822, the committee of elections of the House, to whom the matter was referred, reported *unanimously* in favor of Hansen's right to a seat, and the report was adopted by the House by a large majority. The fact of *unanimity* of the committee is good evidence that it was not a party question. Hansen having been thus confirmed in his seat, Shaw took his saddle-bags, mounted his horse and made his way back to Pike county, neither he nor any one else ever dreaming that the matter could come up again.

It was not until after this contested election case was settled that the convention question came to be seriously considered. The members of the Legislature who had opposed the election of Governor Coles became embittered against him, after he had taken such radical ground in his message in regard to the abolition of the remnant of slavery existing in the State, and also in relation to the inhuman and disgraceful *Black Code.* This feeling culminated in a determination to change the fundamental law of the State. This purpose was the more inexcusable, from the fact that the question

Leonard White, six votes, and Samuel D. Lockwood two votes. Thomas received five majority over all. Hansen's vote was not therefore necessary to elect Thomas. All the Candidates were Convention men except Lockwood.

had never been mooted in the election of members to the Legislature. The leaders of the conspiracy to change the Constitution entered actively on their work. They commenced by cautiously sounding the members. To those whose pro-slavery sentiments were well known, the object to make Illinois a slave State was openly avowed; but to those who were not at first prepared to take such a step, other reasons for the call of a convention were urged as a pretext. The question was, could the requisite two-thirds majority be had in both Houses to pass a resolution to call a convention to "alter, revise and amend the Constitution." That was the great work to be accomplished—"*Hic labor, hoc opus est.*" In the senate there was no doubt that out of the eighteen members, twelve (two-thirds) were *solid* for the convention and slavery. But in the House the question was doubtful. Counting McFatridge of Johnson, and Hansen of Pike, as against a convention, two votes were to be obtained in some way to make the requisite two-thirds. As the session wore on, the excitement increased and the convention men became desperate indeed. Their rallying cry was "The convention or death." Everything in the Legislature was shaped to effect final success. The convention question

was paramount to all other business before the Legislature. Local bills in which individual members were interested, and upon the passage of which their political life depended, were unceremoniously laid upon the table, or held in the hands of committees, until the refractory or doubtful member yielded to the pressure. Officers in the gift of that body were held in abeyance, and promises of political preferment to those who sought distinction were abundant. Those who opposed the favorite measure were threatened and denounced. Legislative despotism ruled supreme; and the co-ordinate branches of the government, for the time being, were merged in the unlimited power exercised by the Senate and House of Representatives.*

The action of the convention party in the Legislature was to the last degree unfair, tyrannical and insulting. Fearing discussion and the exposure of their real purposes, they shut off all debate on the most vital and important question that could ever come before a Legislative body. In the Senate, Mr. Kinkade, of Lawrence, declared that it was due alike to the Senate and to the people, that the objects for which a convention should be called should be explained; but in accord with a previous

* Hon. Wm. H. Brown's Paper before the Chicago Historical Society.

understanding, not a single word was vouchsafed in reply; having the floor, he then proceeded to state the reasons of his opposition to the Convention Resolution, and openly charged that the object in view was to make a slave constitution. He was at this point violently interrupted, called to order and compelled to take his seat. In the House, so far as I am able to gather, no general discussion was allowed.

How were the two necessary votes to be had in the House? In looking over the ground the idea was conceived, that an advantage could be gained by passing a Convention Resolution, by a *joint vote* of the two Houses. The Senate, therefore, passed a resolution declaring that if two-thirds of all the members of both Houses should recommend to the people to vote for or against a convention, it would be in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution. Colonel Alexander P. Field, of Union county (who, in conjunction with Emanuel J. West, of Madison county), had taken the leadership of the pro-slavery and convention men in the House, introduced a similar resolution in the House, but from the fact, not so much that no construction of the Constitution could justify such a method of voting, as from the fact that such method

would not give them any more votes, it was rejected by a vote of twenty to sixteen.

The Senate then passed the convention resolution by the required number of votes, but the House prudently permitted it to lie upon the table until the real strength of the convention men might be tested in its own body. To that end, Mr. West, of Madison, introduced a resolution, similar to that of the Senate, into the House. This resolution obtained twenty-two votes, *Hansen voting for it,* and McFatridge against it. Rattan, of Greene, a convention man, voted in the negative in order to move a re-consideration if it should be necessary. This affirmative vote would have made twenty-three, one less than was necessary. But *one* vote more, therefore, was necessary to accomplish the great object for which such a stupendous effort had been made. That *one* vital vote was wanting and the resolution failed. In the meantime McFatridge,* who had been an anti-convention man,

*Mr. McFatridge was, I judge, of Scotch-Irish origin; a man about sixty years of age, of kind heart and generous disposition. He had fallen into the very general evil of the times, and drank more liquor than his legislative duties actually required. Late in an afternoon session a member moved an adjournment; Mr. McF., *in his chair*, opposed it. It was carried by a large vote, and the speaker declared the House adjourned. McFatridge, raising his voice above the noise occasioned by the general movement, exclaimed: "Mr. Speaker—Mr. Speaker,—you may adjourn the House, and be hanged,

through some unseen influence had changed front, and his vote, together with that of Hansen, now thought perfectly secure, would carry the measure through. Everything was now ready, and certain success seemed assured. On the 11th of February, 1823, the Senate resolution, which had been quietly lying on the speaker's table, was taken up for its final passage. The convention men were in great glee. They felt that their hopes were now to be realized, after so much labor and effort, so much coaxing and driving during the entire session. But

> "The best laid schemes o' mice and men,
> Gang aft a-gley:"

At the very pinch of the game, what was the astonishment and fury to find Hansen changing front and voting *against the resolution*. It is to be regretted that Hansen's course is neither very clear, nor very satisfactory in this regard. It was, therefore, *lost;* twenty-three votes only being in its favor, instead of the necessary twenty-four. What was now to be done? A member who had voted with

but old Billy McFatridge will remain in session until sundown, and look after the interests of his constituents, while you are *cavorting* at Copp's grocery and getting drunk on the hard earnings of the people." [*W. H. Brown's Paper read before the Chicago Historical Society.*]

the losing side moved to reconsider, but the Speaker of the House, William M. Alexander, a convention man, decided, that according to all parliamentary rules and practices, it could not be done. An appeal from that decision was taken, and the Speaker was sustained by a vote of eighteen to sixteen, two members not voting. The resolution was therefore, defeated and apparently beyond the reach of resurrection; but with men wrought up to such a degree of excitement as the convention men were, there was no such word as "fail," even in the worst of causes. The "Convention or Death," was still the cry.

The indignation against Hansen knew no bounds. The members, who had become convention men, and who had voted to confirm him in his seat, at the commencement of the session, were the most furious of all; and now was conceived and carried out a measure of revolutionary violence and madness, happily without a parallel in our history—a blot upon the fair escutcheon of our State, and the villainy of which "returned to plague the inventors." By the suffrages of his constituents, confirmed by a vote of the House, Nicholas Hansen had held his seat in the House of Representatives, from the very first day of the session; and after a contest, solemn-

ly decided in his favor on the 9th day of December, 1822, that seat was held unchallenged and unquestioned by anybody. The convention men in the House, in this crisis of their affairs, proved themselves equal to the emergency which confronted them. On the 12th, of February, 1823, and nine weeks after the House had decided that Hansen was duly and legally elected, and after he had sat all that time without one question being raised as to his right to a seat, Colonel Alexander P. Field, of Union, made an extraordinary motion. It was no other than a motion to reconsider the Resolution of the House, adopted December 9th, 1822, declaring Nicholas Hansen to be entitled to his seat. He made a long speech in favor of this motion, going over questions which had been fully decided by the House when the contest was up. He did not state a single reason for the adoption of his motion which was worthy a moment's consideration; but it was simply the appeal of a desperate faction made through him, to bring members who might be supposed to have some ideas of conscience, up to a "sticking point." It seems that the friends of Shaw had set up a bogus poll, one independent of the legal voting place, where it was charged that eighty or ninety men from Missouri and other

places had voted, and who had no qualification as electors. The House rejected all such votes when it came to decide the case. Field complained of this, and contended that these men, who had voted at the bogus poll, had only exercised a privilege—"A privilege," he exclaimed, "which when we cease to enjoy *I wish to cease to be a member of society.*" Continuing, he said, "that it was with astonishment and surprise he had heard gentlemen proclaim in the House that we, when adjudicating on questions of this kind, *cannot depart from the strict letter of the law, but are bound to observe it in all its niceties.*" Farther on he dwelt upon "the greatest privilege the Constitution conferred upon the people—the right to vote," and concluded: "when a man approaches the polls, and exercises his dearest right, he never stops to make the inquiry, will my vote be rejected if I exercise it here? No; on the contrary he feels proud to think how far better his situation is over the person who is forced to *bow at the nod of an unfeeling despot and bear the chains of tyranny.*" Mather, of Randolph, and Churchill, of Madison, stated good reasons why the House should not disturb its former judgment, but the speech of Field did the business. The resolution which the House

had adopted and which it was proposed to re-consider was at follows:

"*Resolved*, That Nicholas Hansen is entitled to a seat in this House."

The motion to reconsider was carried and the resolution was before the House for action. It was thought necessary, however, to base the action which the members of the House proposed to take on some pretext and put the case on some different ground from that on which it had been originally decided. Here "Mr. Turney presented the affidavit of Levi Roberts, dated January 28th, 1823, who certified that, *in his opinion*, Mr. Shaw received a majority of 29 of all the qualified votes of Pike county." This ex-parte affidavit, made by a friend of Shaw, then at Vandalia, and without notice and opportunity for cross-examination, stating no fact, but merely expressing an opinion, was deemed sufficient to answer a purpose which was to be accomplished in any event. A motion was made to strike out the words "Nicholas Hansen" in the resolution and insert the words "John Shaw," which motion was carried. In the interest of history I give the names of those members who voted that Hansen was entitled to the seat at the commencement of the session, and that he *was not*

entitled to it at its close: Alexander, of Pope, Campbell, of Wayne, Daimwood, of Gallatin, Davenport, of Gallatin, Dorriss, of Franklin, Emmitt, of White, Ford, of Crawford, Logan, of White, McFerron, of Randolph, West, of Madison, and Will, of Jackson.

When it was decided at the last moment that Hansen was to be put *out* and Shaw put *in*, the latter was at his home in Pike county, some one hundred and thirty miles distant, over a sparsely settled country. It was necessary to get Shaw to Vandalia at the earliest moment. The journey, going and coming would ordinarily occupy at least five days, but by relays of horses and hard driving it could be made in four. A special messenger was therefore dispatched to find Shaw and bring him to Vandalia in the shortest possible time, and he arrived there in season to perform the part allotted to him. After Shaw had taken his seat, another outrage had to be committed before the work in hand could be consummated. The vote of the House sustaining the speaker in an appeal taken from his decision, that a member of the constitutional minority could not move a re-consideration, was reconsidered. Then a member voting on the losing side moved a reconsideration of

the last convention resolution, which was carried. All that was then required was the vote of Shaw to make the requisite twenty-four votes. That vote was given, and in that way the resolution was passed by a two-thirds vote of both Houses, authorizing the people of the State to vote on the proposition to call a convention to amend the Constitution at a general election to be held on the first Monday of August, 1824.

As this outrage in unseating Hansen became a great factor in the stupendous contest which followed on the question of the Convention, a brief allusion to the man and his history may not prove uninteresting. Nicholas Han*sen* (not Han*son*, as his name has gone into history and legislative records,) was a young lawyer, who settled at "Coles' Grove" (sometimes written "Colsgrove"), the first county seat of Pike county, now "Gilead," in Calhoun county, in 1820, where he taught school. He was commissioned Colonel of the 17th Regiment of the Illinois State Militia, August 11, 1821, by Gov. Bond. The county seat of Pike county was removed in 1823, from Coles' Grove to Atlas, a town situated on the Mississippi bottom, twelve miles west of Pittsfield, the present county seat of Pike. Hansen was of Dutch descent; a graduate

of Union College and had been admitted to the Bar of New York before removing to Illinois. He was County Judge of Pike county in 1821–2, and was elected to the Legislature from Pike county in August, 1822, and at the same election that Edward Coles was elected Govenor. After the removal of the county seat of Pike from Coles' Grove to Atlas, Hansen removed to the latter place. At a Fourth of July celebration at Coles' Grove, in 1823, Col. N. Hansen was the orator of the day. The following toast was drank, with "nine cheers:" "Col. Nicholas Hansen, a member of our last Legislature, sacrificed on the altar of Slavery; may his services to his country be duly appreciated by the Republicans of Illinois."

Hon. Wm. H. Brown, in his admirable Paper on the convention struggle, read before the Chicago Historical Society, says that the effect of Hansen's equivocal position in the Legislature was such that after he returned home he closed up his business and left the State. In this he is mistaken. After the adjournment of the Legislature he returned to Atlas and became a Justice of the peace, and deputy clerk of Colonel William Ross, "who held nearly all the offices of Pike county." He was elected to the Legislature a second time from Pike

and Calhoun counties in 1824, but resigned his seat. On the 28th of May, 1824, he was commissioned by Governor Coles as Brigadier General of the Third Brigade of the First Division of Illinois State Militia. July 5th, 1826, Governor Coles appointed him Judge of Probate for Pike county, as will be seen by the following letter. On the 5th of September, 1827, Governor Edwards issued an official order to General Hansen to enroll in the militia all persons subject to military duty at the "Lead Mines on Fever River or in that vicinity."

Letter of Governor Coles to General Hansen.

VANDALIA, July 5, 1826.

Dear Sir: Your letter of May 23d, recommending Wm. Ross as a suitable person to be appointed Judge of Probate of Pike, has been received; and I now address you, not so much for the purpose of acknowledging it, as to make known to all whom it may concern, and especially to remove any misconception as to your conduct, that your letter is the only written or verbal communication I have received in relation to the person who should fill Mr. Hight's vacancy, and that I have not received a line or a word, or even a hint, from you or from any person else, that you wanted the office, or would accept it: but believing you better qualified than any other person in the county, and that while you continue to hold the office of Recorder, that you could very conveniently and with some little profit, discharge the duties of Judge of Probate, I have determined to appoint you to that office, and herewith inclose your com-

mission. I have been thus explicit in order that it should be understood how you, who recommended another, should yourself receive the appointment.

If it should not be agreeable to you to accept the office of Judge of Probate, you will be pleased to address me a letter to Edwardsville, where I shall go in a few days, and remain most of the warm and sickly season.

The death of my mother, which occurred last spring, will render it necessary for me to be in Virginia in January next, at which time her estate is to be divided, and it is necessary for me, as one of the legatees, to be there. This will compel me to set out in December, soon after the meeting of the General Assembly, at which time, if not before, I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you. I propose to return to this State in the spring by way of Philadelphia and New York.

With great respect and sincere regard I am your friend,

EDWARD COLES.

GEN. N. HANSEN,
Pike County.

Col. Benjamin Barney, of Barry, Illinois, who was a cotempoary of Hansen, having become acquainted with him in October, 1825, at Atlas, says that he came from near Albany, N. Y., and from a place called "The Walnuts." Captain John Webb, one of the oldest citizens of Pike county, says he went to school to Hansen in 1820, and that he understood that he came from Warren county, N. Y. In the fall of 1829, a brother-in-law of Hansen's came to visit him and he went back with him to the

State of New York, and he never returned to Illinois. Captain Webb says the last time he saw Hansen was in 1865, and that he died in 1872, at the age of ninety-one years. He was never married. Col. Barney describes him as a man six feet high, well built and of fine appearance. "He was a man of liberal education, of genial manners and well liked by the pioneers of Pike county. His only fault was a love of liquor."*

Gen. Hansen seems to have been a man of ability and of polished education. Though bred a lawyer in the New York school, which at that day meant something, he appears never to have practiced his profession in this state to any extent. Neither does he appear to have made the mark in life, which might have been expected from a man of his endowments, but left the State making no sign. I made an effort to find out something of his history after he went back to New York, but was unsuccessful.†

*Judge William Thomas, of Jacksonville, who knew him well, says he was "an habitual drinker, but not a drunkard—a man well informed in regard to the history of the country and the leading politicians."

The pro-slavery men of Edwardsville were so enraged with Hansen, that after he was turned out of the House they burned him in effigy; but Hansen was revenged. The ringleader in the ceremony was one Swearingen, a Virginian, who was afterwards hanged in Mississippi.

† I am indebted to my esteemed friend, Judge Chauncy L. Higbee, of Pittsfield, Pike County, for much of the information I have obtained in regard to Gen. Hansen.

I have also in my hands a letter from Hansen to Governor Coles, dated Vandalia, December 23d, 1826, which was after Coles went out of office. It is written in a very neat and scholarly hand, and I give it herewith, as a letter not without a certain historical interest.

VANDALIA, Dec. 23, 1826.

Dear Governor:—I have delayed a little while in writing to you, waiting for something new and interesting, but, alas! I am where I begun, and can only say that Illinois is *Illinois.* Our legislature is yet harmonious, and though bountifully supplied with the gift of *gab*, has not yet brought forth anything sufficiently indicative of its character upon the future interets of our State. The Circuit Courts will undoubtedly be abolished, and in their stead we will have the Judges of the Supreme Court, without an increase. O.. T..... S .....means to make all Illinois for him, or else against him, placing his redemption and resurrection on the *vox populi.* No man refuses Edward Coles the character of an honest man and consistent politician; and it pleases me every day to hear men bear the strongest testimony to your real merits. To be short, the want of you is felt.

On the subject of the agency at Peoria, I have got Turney, Judge Browne, Mr. Forquer, and Judge Lockwood to write to Mr. Cook. Hamilton has got the protem appointment from Gen'l Clark. I am indeed desirous of succeeding, as it would benefit me individually; and enable me to serve my friends and punish my enemies.

I will write you again.

Your friend,

NICHOLAS HANSEN.

GOVERNOR COLES.

Hansen it seems at this time was seeking an office. Some of the pro-slavery men appear to have forgiven him for his course in the Legislature for two of them, Judge Browne and General Turney, joined George Forquer and Judge Lockwood in writing the congressman, at that day, Hon. Daniel P. Cook, in his behalf. It will be perceived that there is a charming frankness in the closing part of his letter, in which he says that the office he desires would enable him "*to serve his friends and punish his enemies.*"

CHAPTER X.

TRIUMPH OF THE CONVENTION MEN; THEIR INDECENT JOY; ACCOUNT OF THEIR MOB PROCEEDINGS, BY GOVERNOR FORD AND GOVERNOR JOHN REYNOLDS; ANTI-CONVENTION MEN APPALLED AT THE PRO-SLAVERY TRIUMPH, BUT IMMEDIATELY ORGANIZE TO DEFEAT THE RESOLUTION AT THE POLLS; STIRRING ADDRESS OF THE ANTI-CONVENTION MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE TO THE PEOPLE OF ILLINOIS; THE SIGNERS OF THE ADDRESS; JUDGE GILLESPIE'S SKETCHES; OTHER SKETCHES; ALEXANDER A. FIELD; HIS CHECQUERED HISTORY.

THE joy of the convention men over this triumph outran all bounds. No consideration of decency or discretion could restrain them. An impromptu jollification was gotten up, not only to celebrate their hard-earned victory, but to insult and degrade their opponents. I will let Governor Ford describe this affair:

"The night after this resolution passed, the convention party assembled to triumph in a great carousal. They formed themselves into a noisy, disorderly and tumultuous procession, headed by Judge Phillips, Judge Smith, Judge Thomas Reynolds, late Governor of Missouri, and Lieutenant Governor Kinney, followed by the majority of the Legislature, and the hangers-on and rabble about the seat of government; and they marched with

the blowing of tin horns and the beating of drums and tin pans, to the residence of Governor Coles, and to the boarding houses of their principal opponents, towards whom they manifested their contempt and displeasure by a confused medley of groans, wailings and lamentations. Their object was to intimidate and crush all opposition at once." *

Governor John Reynolds, who was a pro-slavery, as well as a convention man at the time, in his History, "*My Own Times*," thus speaks of the action of the House in turning out Hansen and of the conduct of the mob afterwards: "This proceeding in the General Assembly looked *revolutionary*, and was condemned by all honest and reflecting men. This outrage was a *death blow to the convention*. The night after the passage of the resolution there was at the seat of Government a a wild and indecorous procession by torch-light and liquor, and that was also unpopular."

The members of the Legislature who had heroically, but unsuccessfully, resisted the passage of the convention resolution, as well as Governor Coles and the anti-convention men of the State, then at Vandalia, were appalled at the pro-slavery triumph.

* Ford's History of Illinois, page 53.

The convention men, certain of the success of their schemes at the polls, were arrogant, insulting and defiant. Such was the apparent strength of the pro-slavery and convention men that there was scarcely a ray of light in the gloom that enveloped the cause of freedom. There were, however, some courageous hearts who determined to accept the gauntlet which had been thrown down. As soon as the Legislature adjourned, Governor Coles invited all the principal anti-convention men of the State, who were then at Vandalia, to meet him at the Governor's room to consult upon the course to be adopted in view of the late action of the Legislature. Fully appreciating the supreme importance of the question which had been thrust upon them, and animated by great impulses, they determined upon an immediate organization, and to resist at the very threshold the conspiracy to make Illinois a slave State, and measures were taken to accomplish their purposes. The first thing to be done was to have the members of the Legislature, who voted against the convention scheme, issue an address to the people of Illinois. This address, which was undoubtedly drawn up by Governor Coles, unmasked the purposes of the conspirators to make a slave constitution, and exposed all the

various devices and means that had been resorted to to accomplish their purpose. It was an impassioned appeal to the people to rise up in their might and save the State from the greatest shame and disaster that could ever be visited upon any people. This address, now read after a period of nearly sixty years, cannot but excite the most stirring emotions. Speaking of slavery it says: "What a strange spectacle would be presented to the civilized world, to see the people of Illinois, yet innocent of this great national sin, and in the full enjoyment of all the blessings of free government, sitting down in solemn convention to deliberate and determine whether they should introduce among them a portion of their fellow beings, to be cut off from those blessings, to be loaded with the chains of bondage, and rendered unable to leave any other legacy to their posterity than the inheritance of their own servitude! The wise and the good of all nations would blush at our political depravity. Our professions of republicanism and equal freedom would incur the derision of despots and the scorn and reproach of tyrants. We should write the epitaph of free government upon its tombstone."

After dwelling upon the moral aspects of slave-

ry, the address argues against its introduction on account of its inexpediency, and closes with the following eloquent appeal: "In the name of unborn millions who will rise up after us, and call us blessed or accursed, according to our deeds —in the name of the injured sons of Africa, whose claims to equal rights with their fellow men will plead their own cause against their usurpers before the tribunal of eternal justice, we conjure you, fellow citizens, TO PONDER UPON THESE THINGS."

There were fifteen members of the Legislature, Senators and Representatives—brave, conscientious and God-fearing men—who signed this noble and timely Appeal to the people of Illinois. I give all their names, for they deserve to be written in letters of gold on the tablets of the State's history. The signers are:

RISDON MOORE,
WILLIAM KINKADE,
GEORGE CADWELL,
ANDREW BANKSON,
JACOB OGLE,
CURTISS BLAKEMAN,
ABRAHAM CAIRNES,
WILLIAM LOWERY,
JAMES SIMS,
DANIEL PARKER,
GEORGE CHURCHILL,
GILBERT T. PELL,
DAVID MCGAHEY,
STEPHEN STILLMAN,
THOMAS MATHER.

There were three other members of the Legislature who voted against the convention resolution but who did not sign this appeal. They were Robert

Frazier, a Senator from Edwards county, Raphael Widen, a Representative from Randolph county, and J. H. Pugh, a Representative from Bond county. What influenced them not to join in this Appeal is not now known, but it is probable that they might have left Vandalia before the paper had been drawn up.

I wish it were in my power to do something to rescue from oblivion the names of these brave and true men in the Legislature, who fought out the battle against the introduction of slavery into the State, and whose labors and influence contributed so much to save our commonwealth from one of the most appalling calamities ever visited upon a people. They were men of no particular distinction in their day and generation, and there was not a man among them of any great prominence, or distinguished by talent or eloquence. But they had great convictions and true courage, and during all the long and fearful conflict it could be said of them,

"No dangers daunted and no labors tired."

Earnest as these men were, and devoted and patriotic as they were, yet it is evident that they "builded better than they knew." It would have seemed almost impossible in that day to comprehend

the stupendous consequences which would have resulted from the success of the slave party.

Through the kindness of friends in different parts of the State, I have been able to obtain some information in regard to these anti-convention men in the Legislature. It is much to be regretted that it is not more full.

The two members from St. Clair county, who voted against the convention resolution, were RISDON MOORE and JACOB OGLE. Mr. Moore was a member of the House in the Territorial Legislature in 1814 and 1815, of which he was the Speaker, both sessions. Born in Delaware in 1760, he served in the Navy for a short time toward the close of the Revolution. His father, Charles Moore also served in the Revolution. After the close of the war, Risdon learned the trade of a blacksmith. In 1789, he moved to Guilford Court House, N. C. He there married a daughter of Col. Wm. Dent, and in the following year moved to Hancock county, Georgia, and settled near Sparta. He resided twenty-two years in Georgia and raised a family of nine children. He was a member of the Georgia Legislature from Hancock county, in 1795 and 1796, and also in the years 1808 and 1809. He was brought up an Episcopalian, but left that

church to join the Methodist, a denomination with a more marked hostility to the institution of slavery, which he held in abhorrence. In 1812 he moved from Georgia to St. Clair county. His own family with his white servant, whom he brought with him, numbered fifteen, and his colored people numbered eighteen. He was distinguished for his great kindness to the colored people, and he frequently said that he had never inflicted punishment on a slave. He was a member of the lower house of the legislature from St. Clair county, from the 1st to the 5th General Assembly—1818 to 1826. He was a most vehement opponent of the Convention Resolution, and he and George Churchill, the anti-convention member from Madison county, were burned in effigy in Troy, in that county.* Mr. Moore was a

* It is hard to believe at this day that two such men as GEORGE CHURCHILL and RISDON MOORE were burned in effigy in what is now the staid and sober county of Madison for resisting the introduction of slavery into the State in 1823-4. Goveror Koener says such was the fact, and Judge Gillespie confirms it. He says that the Rev. Jesse Renfro now living at Troy, was present and saw the two men burned in effigy. It was in this same county of Madison, at Alton, on the night of the 7th of November 1837, that Elijah P. Lovejoy was murdered by a mob for attempting to establish an anti-slavery newspaper in that city. Madison county became afterwards a strong anti-slavery county, and her people one of the most law abiding in the State.

"Humanity sweeps onward,
Where to-day the Martyr stands,
On the morrow crouches Judas,
With the silver in his hands."

strong Adams man in 1824 and in 1828. He was once or twice a member of the County Court, and was called Judge Moore, to distinguish him from his cousin, Risdon Moore, a democrat, and a Senator from St. Clair county from 1828 to 1830. Judge Moore was a man highly respected in every walk in life, and always a prominent member of the Methodist Church. His numerous descendants are all of the highest respectability. He settled about four miles east of Belleville, at what was at that time called the "Turkey Hill Settlement."

JACOB OGLE, born in Virginia, was the son of Capt. Joseph Ogle, of Virginia, who was a soldier of the Revolution. Both father and son came to what is now Monroe county, in 1785; and they moved to a point near where O'Fallen is now situated, in St. Clair county, on a creek named after him, Ogle's creek, in 1821. Jacob Ogle was a "Ranger" in 1812. They were both leadding members of the Methodist Church. In addition to being a member of the "Convention Legislature," in 1830 Jacob Ogle was elected to the lower house of the General Assembly, from St. Clair county. He seems to have held no other position except Justice of the Peace. He was a

well-to-do farmer, highly respected and intelligent. He died in 1844, aged seventy-two years.

RAPHAEL WIDEN, who, as a member of the House from Randolph county, voted against the Convention Resolution, was a native of Sweden, but left there when but eight years old for France, where he was educated for a Catholic priest. He emigrated from France to the United States in 1815. He married Miss Frances Lalemier in Cahokia, in 1818, and died of cholera, in Kaskaskia, in 1833. His widow afterwards married Capt. E. Walker, and she died in Chester, the present county seat of Randolph, in 1874. He has a son, Wm. S. Widen, and a daughter, the wife of John L. Edwards, both of whom live in Chester. Mr. Widen was a member of the State Senate, from Randolph county, from 1824 to 1828.

ANDREW BANKSON was first elected a Senator from Washington county in 1822. He voted against the Convention Resolution. He was re-elected to the Senate in 1824 and served till 1826. He settled in St. Clair county, on Silver Creek, four miles south of Lebanon, in 1808 or 1810, from whence he must have removed to Washington county. In 1812 he was Colonel of the Rangers. He was a Captain in the Black Hawk war in 1832.

Removing from Illinois he settled in Iowa Territory, some distance west of Dubuque. He was a member of the Iowa Legislature and held other offices. He was a native of Tennessee and died in Wisconsin, in 1853, while visiting a son-in-law.

ABRAHAM CAIRNES was a member of the House from Lawrence county, and voted against the convention resolution. He settled in Crawford county in 1816, and in that part of it afterwards embraced in Lawrence county, which was organized in 1821. He was a member of the House in the previous General Assembly, in 1820-2, from Crawford county. He does not appear to have been a member of the Legislature after 1822-4. I can get but little information in regard to him, further than that in the canvass he was an active and efficient opponent of the Convention Resolution. He removed from Lawrence county to some point in the Mississippi River, in 1826. He was a native of Kentucky.

DAVID MCGAHEY was a member of the House from Crawford county. He settled in that county in 1817 and continued to reside there until his death in 1851. He was re-elected to the House in 1824 from Crawford, and from Lawrence and Crawford in 1832, and elected a Senator from the

same counties in 1834. His son, James D. McGahey, was elected to the House from Crawford at the same time, and died during his term of service. Though a Tennesseean, Mr. McGahey was a strong opponent of slavery, and was one of the twelve members of the House who voted against the Convention Resolution. From the number of times he was elected to the Legislature it is evident he enjoyed the confidence of the people to a high degree.

WILLIAM KINKADE settled in what is now Lawrence county in 1817. He was a member of the State Senate from Wayne and Lawrence from 1822 to 1824, and voted against the Convention Resolution. When the question was up before the Senate, he demanded of the friends of the resolution to define their position, as the people had a right to know whether or not their object in calling a convention was to introduce slavery into the State. As the convention men had determined in caucus to permit no discussion, they sat silent in their seats and made no response. Mr. Kinkade then commenced a bold and aggressive speech, and charged on the convention party a purpose they dared not avow. As he was treading on dangerous ground, he was immediately called to order. Lt. Governor Hub-

bard, the presiding officer of the Senate, unhesitatingly applied the gag, and he was not permitted to proceed. He only served once in the Legislature.

Mr. Kinkade was appointed postmaster at Lawrenceville by John Quincy Adams and held the office many years. He was a Tennesseean by birth. He died in 1846, leaving two sons, one of whom, A. G. Kinkade, now lives in Richland county; the other son only survived his father for a few years.

ROBERT FRAZIER, the Senator from Edwards county, who voted against the Convention Resolution, had been a Senator in the previous legislature from the same county, and elected in 1820. Unfortunately I have not been able to find out much in regard to him. He was a farmer, and lived in that part of Edwards which was afterward set off to Wabash. He afterward took up his residence in Edwards county, about four miles east of Albion, and died on his farm. He was a Kentuckian by birth. "Frazier's Prairie," in Edwards county, was named after him.

THOMAS MATHER, of Randolph county, was the most active and efficient opponent of the Convention Resolution in the House of Representatives. He was one of nine members of this House who had been members of the House in the preceding

legislature. Thomas Mather and his colleague Raphael Widen, Risdon Moore, of St. Clair, and Abraham Cairnes, of Crawford, were the only members of the House in the "Convention Legislature," who were opposed to the Convention Resolution, who had been members of the previous House. Mather was therefore an "old member," and from his experience and ability he naturally became the leader of the opposition. In the campaign which followed the adoption of the Convention Resolution Mr. Mather bore a conspicuous part in the public discussion against the measure and rendered a great and valuable service to the cause. A native of Connecticut, he came to Illinois and settled in Kaskaskia in 1818, and engaged in mercantile business. Becoming interested in political affairs, two years later 1820, he was elected a member of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly, from Randolph county, in conjunction with Raphael Widen. He was again elected to the House in 1822, and re-elected in 1824. Governor Coles appointed him an aid-de-camp on his staff, and he ever afterwards bore the title of Colonel. He was elected Speaker of the House in the legislature elected in 1824, and served during the first session. He resigned the speakership at the end of this ses-

sion, and David Blackwell, of St. Clair, was elected in his place for the second session. He was again elected to the House from Randolph in 1828, in conjunction with Hypolite Menard. In 1832 he was elected Senator from Randolph and Perry, and resigned in 1834. His legislative service was a long and honorable one and useful to the State. Col. Mather held no political position after he resigned as Senator in 1834, but became identified with many public enterprises. He became widely known in the State as the President of the State Bank of Illinois, and ever maintained the highest character for integrity, liberality, and public spirit. He was the only member of the convention legislature I ever knew, except John Shaw. Though a resident of Springfield, he died in Philadelphia, March 28, 1855. The last time I met him was a little while before this date, at the Astor House, New York City. He was then in very bad health. His widow, now over eighty years of age, still survives him, and resides at Springfield.

JONATHAN H. PUGH represented Bond county in the Legislature, and voted against the call of the Convention. He afterwards removed to Springfield, where he figured in politics and at the Bar. He was reputed to be a very fine lawyer, but died

at an early age, universally respected. He ran for Congress as a Whig in 1832.

Doctor GEORGE CADWELL, first physician of Morgan county, was born the 21st February, 1773, in Wethersfield, Connecticut. He received his literary education at Hartford, his medical education at Rutland, Vermont. He was united in marriage with Miss Pamelia Lyon, daughter of Hon. Matthew Lyon, on the 12th February, 1797, in Vergennes, Vermont.

Gov. Reynolds, in his history of Illinois, says: "In the year 1799, sailed down the Ohio river Matthew Lyon and family, with John Messenger and Dr. George Cadwell and their respective families. The last two named were the sons-in-law of Lyon, and all settled in Kentucky, at Eddyville. Messenger and Dr. Cadwell left Eddyville in 1802, and landed from a boat in the American Bottom, not far from old Fort Chartres. They remained in the Bottom for some time, and Dr. Cadwell moved and settled on the Illinois bank of the Mississippi, opposite the Gasharit Island, and above St. Louis. He was quite a respectable citizen — practiced his profession, and served the people in various public offices. He was justice of the peace and county judge for many

years in St. Clair county, and in Madison also after its formation. Since the establishment of the State Government he served in the General Assembly from Madison and Greene counties, at different times, and always aquitted himself with satisfaction to the public. After a long life spent in usefulness, he died in Morgan county quite an old man. He was moral and correct in his public and private life, and left a character much more to be admired than condemned; was a respectable physician, and always maintained an unblemished character."

The doctor was elected State Senator from the county of Madison in 1818, and served the full term of four years. In the fall of 1820 he removed into the territory subsequently included in the county of Morgan—still in his Senatorial district; he settled in the point of timber known as Swinerton's Point, east of the Allison Mound, where he remained with his family until he died. In 1822, he was elected to the Senate from the county of Greene, and attached territory, and voted against the convention resolution. In dividing the Senators elected from nine districts into two classes, the seats of one to be vacated at the end of two years, and the other at the end of four years, the Doctor's term was made to expire at the end of two years, so

that he served but one session. He died 1st of August, 1826, from an attack of billious fever.*

DANIEL PARKER, who was the senator from Crawford and Clark counties, was a Baptist minister who emigrated from Tennessee. He resided at Palestine, Crawford county. He removed from Illinois to Palestine, Texas (date not known), and for some time had charge of a church at that place.

WILLIAM LOWREY, representative from Clark County, voted against the Convention Resolution, and resided in what is now Edgar county, a few miles north of Paris. He was from Kentucky and had been an associate judge of Greenup county. After the organization of Edgar county he served for a time as circuit clerk of that county. Sometime after the year 1830 he removed to Dewitt county, Illinois, where he died.

JAMES SIMS was born in Virginia and was taken by his parents to South Carolina, where he was married. From thence he moved to Logan county, Kentucky. Thence to St. Clair county, Illinois, and from thence to Sangamon county in 1820. He was the first Representative from Sangamon county in the State Legislature, and elected in August, 1822. From Sangamon county he removed to

* Judge Wm. Thomas, in the Jacksonville *Journal.*

Rock Creek, in what is now Menard county, and from thence to Morgan county. He was a Methodist preacher and formed the first circuit ever organized in Sangamon county.

STEPHEN STILLMAN, who was the first Senator ever elected from Sangamon county, was born in Massachusetts and emigrated with his mother, the widow of Benjamin Stillman, to Sangamon county, Illinois, in the spring of 1820. The family settled near Williamsville. A post office was established there and Mr. Stillman was made postmaster. It was the first post office north of the Sangamon river. Mr. Stillman died in Peoria between 1835 and 1840. His brother Isaiah Stillman was in command of a body of troops in the Black Hawk war in 1832, at a point in Ogle county, which has ever since been known as "Stillman's Run."

GILBERT T. PELL was a member of the House of Representatives from Edwards county, in the Convention Legislature. He was the son-in-law of Morris Birkbeck, and very naturally was an anti-slavery man, who voted against the convention scheme. He continued to live in Edwards county some time after the death of Mr. Birkbeck, and was elected to the lower House of the legislature in 1828. He afterwards left the State, and dying subsequently, his widow removed to Australia.

My old and valued friend, Judge Joseph Gillespie, of Edwardsville, who still remains among us in all his physical and intellectual vigor, honored, respected and beloved, and who is a connecting link between the earlier and later Illinois, and whose knowledge of all of our earlier public men surpasses that of most men in the State, has been kind enough to give me some sketches of the members of the "Convention Legislature," as it was called. The members of the House from Madison county who voted against the convention were Curtiss Blakeman and George Churchill. Of Captain Blakeman he says:

"He emigrated from New York in 1817, and along with several other sea captains made a settlement in Madison county, to which they gave the name of "*Marine.*" They displayed great taste in the selection of a location. It is my deliberate conviction that for beauty of scenery and fertility of soil it has no equal. * * * * * * * * * * * * * Captain Blakeman was always an outspoken abolitionist and became a member of a society that was formed in Edwardsville as early as 1820, in aid of the anti-slavery cause. Opposition to slavery was his ruling passion, and he felt it to be his duty to strike at it whenever it showed its head. He took no part in politics except for the purpose of fighting slavery. He commanded the ship that took General Moreau to Europe, who went to join the allied armies against Napoleon in 1813. He said he took the

liberty to ask the General who he thought was the greatest Captain in Europe. Moreau unhesitatingly answered, saying that Bonaparte was the greatest general who ever lived." *

GEORGE CHURCHILL was another member from Madison county, and opposed the call of the convention. He was a thorough paced abolitionist all his life. By profession he was a printer, and was connected with the first paper published in St. Louis. He was from one of the eastern States. Coming to Illinois, he carried on farming during the rest of his life. He was frequently elected to the Legislature, and was accounted the best working member we ever had. He toiled like a drayhorse, but never made a speech of more than five minute's length. That, however, contained all that ought to be said. He entered into no rings or cliques, but went right along with his work, and was never out of

*General Moreau was invited to return from the United States to join the allied armies against Napoleon by the Emperor Alexander of Russia. It was but a few months after his frank conversation with the American sea captain that standing by the side of the Emperor at the battle of Dresden he was mortally wounded by a French bullet on the 27th of August, 1813. He died on the 2d of September following. The star of the great Napoleon, whom he had so highly complimented in his conversation with Captain Blakeman, and in fighting against whom he fell, had now begun to pale. The dreadful disasters to Bonaparte's armies at Dresden, at Leipzig and at Lützen and Bautzen were only relieved a short time afterwards, when the great soldier commanding in person fell upon and nearly destroyed the division of Wrede's Bavarians at Hannau. General Moreau was in the United States from 1804 to 1813. He lived in great quiet and it might almost be said in obscurity, cultivating his acres like Cincinnatus. He was one of the great soldiers of France. Some of the French writers say that as a tactician he was the equal, if not the superior of Napoleon, but on the field of battle he was only in the second rank.

his seat when he ought to be in it. He was never a candidate and never wanted office. If elected, he would serve, and that was all there was about it. He was a perfect walking encyclopedia of political knowledge. It was as dangerous to attack him on a question of political history as it was John Quincy Adams. He was never married. In person he was badly formed, and unprepossessing in appearance; his complexion was sallow, his eye lusterless and expression dull. But he possessed great knowledge and sense.*

It is a melancholy reflection that after a period of less than sixty years that so little is known of these members of the legislature who fought the battle of freedom and who rendered a service to the State and to humanity which can never be fully measured. I can appropriately repeat here what I once said on a cognate subject. In the wild and rapid whirl of events in our country we are too apt to neglect or forget history. 'Humanity sweeps onward,' but the recollections of men and the histories of peoples and nations are too often buried in forgetfulness and oblivion. To rescue a name worthy to be remembered and honored, to recall great events, to look back upon the deeds of

* GEORGE CHURCHILL was a member of the House of Representatives in the General Assembly from Madison county from 1822 to 1824, 1824 to 1826, 1826 to 1828, 1828 to 1830, 1830 to 1832. He was a Senator from Madison County from 1838 to 1842, making a total service in the Legislature of fourteen years.

those gone before us, are objects worthy of all our consideration.

It is a somewhat remarkable fact, and in the highest degree honorable to the parties, that out of the eighteen members of the legislature who voted against the Convention Resolution, at least ten of them were from the slave-holding States.*

Their names are:

RISDEN MOORE, from Georgia.
ROBERT FRAZIER, from Kentucky.
WILLIAM KINKADE, from Tennessee.
ABRAHAM CAIRNES, from Kentucky.
DAVID MCGAHEY, from Tennessee.
JACOB OGLE, from Virginia.
WILLIAM LOWERY, from Kentucky.
DANIEL PARKER, from Tennessee.
JAMES SIMS, from South Carolina.
ANDREW BANKSON, from Tennessee.

In addition to the sketches which Judge Gillespie gave me of certain members of the legislature, who voted against the call of the convention, he has sketched some of the leading convention men. They had the advantage of the anti-convention

* I am indebted not only to Judge Gillespie for much valuable information in respect of these anti-convention members of the Legislature, but to Judge Wm. Thomas, of Jacksonville; Governor Koerner, of Belleville; Hon. N. W. Edwards, of Springfield; Hon. Henry Dodge Dement, Secretary of State; Charles Churchill, Esq., of Albion; Hon. George Hunt, of Paris; Hon. Wm. H. Snyder, of Belleville, Hon. T. B. Needles, of Nashville, and my former colleagues in the House of Representatives, Hon. Wm. R. Morrison, of Waterloo, and Hon. James C. Allen, of Olney.

men in the body, not only in the numbers, but in ability and political experience. In the Senate there was Theophilus W. Smith, afterwards Judge of the Supreme Court; William Kinney, afterwards Lieutenant Governor; Joseph A. Beaird and Thomas Sloo, Jr. In the House were William M. Alexander, James A. Whiteside, Emanuel J. West, Zadok Casey, formerly Lieutenant Governor and member of Congress, Col. Alexander P. Field, General James Turney, afterwards Attorney-General of the State. I quote Judge Gillespie: "Theophilus W. Smith was Senator from Madison, and favored the call of a convention. He was an able lawyer and soon obtained a seat upon the bench of the Supreme Court of Illinois, where he would have figured pre-eminently if he had kept aloof from politics, but this he would not; he was "up to the eyes" in every political intrigue of the day. He was from the city of New York, and got his political education in Tammany Hall, and must have been an adept in the trickery for which that institution was famed, even in that early day. Everything done in our political affairs that was rash, reckless and unprecedented, was laid to Judge Smith's charge."

ALEXANDER P. FIELD, of Union county, was a native of Kentucky, and was the nephew of Nathaniel Pope, who was Secretary of the Territory of Illinois, afterwards delegate in Congress from the Territory, and then Judge of the United States District Court for the State of Illinois. I was well acquainted with Field, and practiced law in the same circuit with him for many years. He was a very powerful and successful criminal lawyer. The first time I ever saw him was when he was canvassing for General Jackson. Breese was speaking in opposition to him. Breese was an Adams man. They afterwards changed places: Field deployed as an Adams man and Breese as a democrat. The debate was a very able one. Field was afterwards appointed Secretary of State and held the office for many years, though the State was democratic. He was legislated out of office on account of his politics. He removed to New Orleans before the war, where he distinguished himself as a criminal lawyer. An outspoken opponent of secession, he fell under the displeasure of the rabble of the city, and he was constantly in danger of losing his life. He told me, after the war was over, that before the Union forces got possession of New Orleans, he seldom laid down at night expecting to be alive in the morning. Infuriated crowds would beset him at every turn whenever he left his house, threatening him with death."

This is the first appearance in public life of Alexander P. Field, who represented Union county, then one of the most important counties in the State. He was a lawyer by profession. He afterwards assumed a good deal of importance in official positions in Illinois and elsewhere. He

was a member of the Lower House in the Legislature from Union county from 1822 to 1828. From 1828 to 1830 he represented Union, Johnson and Alexander counties. He was Secretary of State of Illinois from 1828 to 1840, when he was legislated out of office, and finally removed by judicial proceedings. After the election of General Harrison he was appointed Secretary of Wisconsin Territory in 1841, and it was then that I first knew him. Some years afterwards he removed to St. Louis, and then to New Orleans, and was in the latter city at the breaking out of the war. He was regarded as a Union man, though on the arrival of Farragut's fleet in 1862, he seems to have been driven by the threats of the mob into publishing a card intending to convey a different impression. As soon as he was safe from personal violence he published a second card, repudiating the first one in bold and defiant language and ever after that stood in the front ranks of the Union men.

At the opening of the 38th Congress, December 7, 1863, Col. Field (in conjunction with his colleague, Thomas Cottman) was put on the roll of the House as a member of Congress from Louisiana. They both voted on preliminary questions and for Speaker, but after the organization was perfected

the House refused to swear them in as members, and subsequently decided that they were not entitled to seats. Col. Field made an able speech in support of his claim. In answer to suggestions touching his loyalty, he made an eloquent and indignant protest: "I have always been a loyal man. I fought against secession to the utmost of my power. I endangered my life for months and months. I have never been anything else than a loyal man, and I hope that I never will be. I will stand by that flag wherever it floats, and when I die I hope it will be in that country over which it waves." It afforded me pleasure in this connection to speak a few words in vindication of Col. Field. I quote from the Congressional Globe:

"MR. WASHBURNE, of Illinois: The attention of the House has been called to a card said to have been published in New Orleans by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. Field), about the time of the surrender of the city. I have not seen that card, but I desire to bear a word of testimony in regard to the gentleman who claims a seat here, from Louisiana. He was formerly a respected and influential citizen of Illinois, long and well-known for his patriotism and ability. I have known him for nearly a quarter of a century, and it affords me pleasure to speak from my personal knowledge in this regard. I received a letter from a distinguished citizen of Illinois who has been long in New Orleans, in relation to this claimant. He states that he was always one of the most

loyal men, in that State, to the flag of the Union. He commended him to me for devotion to the Union under the most trying circumstances. That is all I desire to say. I have made the statement in justice to the claimant for a seat upon this floor, and what I believe to be due to truth and justice."

The resolution paying the claimants passed by a large majority. The Illinois delegation (with one exception) believing in its propriety, and out of sympathy for an old Illinoisan, voted for it. Hon. J. C. Allen made a strong speech in favor of the resolution.

Col. Field was a man of striking personal appearance, tall and well proportioned, of polished manners, and possessed rare conversational powers. As a lawyer he was particularly successful in criminal cases. After the war he became Attorney-General for the State of Louisiana, and died in 1877 at New Orleans, after a long and painful illness. From a "Convention man" he became a "Jackson man," and then a prominent and influential Whig, and dying at last as a loyal man, and, as he expressed it, "where the flag of his country waved." Many old settlers of Illinois, his cotemporaries, forgetting and forgiving his course on the Convention question, will always have a warm place in their memories for the gifted "Aleck Field."

CHAPTER XI.

ACTION OF THE CONVENTION MEN; THEY ISSUE AN ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE; COL. THOMAS COX, CHAIRMAN OF THEIR MEETING; THE WEAKNESS OF THE "ADDRESS;" NOTICE OF COL. COX; EARLY INCIDENTS IN IOWA TERRITORY; THE BATTLE OF BELLEVUE; ILLINOIS DOUGH-FACES OF THAT DAY IN CONTRAST WITH MR. CRAWFORD; HIS LETTER TO GOVERNOR COLES; THE FIRST CONSTITUTION A GOOD ONE; CAUSE OF THE DISCONTENT OF THE PEOPLE; EMIGRATION PASSING THROUGH THE STATE.

THE convention men anticipated their opponents in an address to the people of Illinois. At a "very large and respectable meeting of citizens from all parts of the State," which was held immediately after the adjournment of the legislature (the day before the "Appeal" of the other side was issued), to express their views relative to the Convention Resolution, Colonel Thomas Cox, of Sangamon county, was chairman of the meeting.* At this meeting sev-

* Col. Thomas Cox was one of the leading men of his day in Illinois. He was not a member of the "Convention Legislature," but he was at Vandalia during its session, and one of the most prominent and influential of the great number of citizens of the State, who visited the seat of Government, to aid in the passage of the Convention Resolution. He resided at Kaskaskia before Illinois was constituted a territory, and it was at his house in Kaskaskia, that the first Territorial Legislature met, on the 25th day of November, 1812. It did not take a very large house to accommodate this body, for the Legislative Council

en of the most prominent convention men of the State then at Vandalia, were appointed a committee to draw up resolutions and an address on the subject. This committee consisted of John McLean, afterwards United States Senator; Senator Theophilus W. Smith, Emanuel J. West, and Thomas Reynolds, afterwards Governor of Missouri; William Kinney, afterwards Lieutenant Governor of Illinois; Alexander P. Field and Joseph A. Beaird. This committee reported resolutions

consisted only of *five* members, and the House of Representatives of *seven* members. He afterwards removed to Union county, and was a member of the Senate in the first State Legislature. He was for a long time the Register of the United States Land Office at Springfield, but charges were made against him, which lost him his office. In 1836 he obtained a contract for the survey of the public lands in that part of Wisconsin Territory which, in June, 1838, was constituted Iowa Territory. He settled on the Maquoketa River, in Jackson county, and in 1838 was elected a member of the House of Representatives to the first Territorial Legislature. He was re-elected in 1839, and became Speaker of the House. He was again elected in 1840. I met him in the month of April of that year, at Bellevue, the county seat of Jackson county, and a few days after the desperate and bloody fight which had occurred at that place. A gang of murderers, horse thieves, counterfeiters and black-legs, had got practical control of that town, and had become so powerful as to defy the legal authorities. A *posse* was called out to make arrests, and Col. Cox assumed command of the force that had assembled from all parts of the county. The outlaws entrenched in the house of the ringleaders, determined on a desperate resistance. Cox marshalled his force under the banks of the Mississippi river, and with great courage he and his men charged upon the house. In this desperate encounter seven men were killed outright and some ten or fifteen wounded. The result was that this gang of villains and desperadoes, one of the most dangerous, defiant and powerful, that ever infested the Northwest, was completely

and an Address to the people of Illinois, at a subsequent meeting, February 17, 1823. The resolutions endorsed the Convention Resolution, declared that it was the right and duty of the people to amend, alter or change their form of government whenever it ceases to be productive of the objects for which all governments are instituted, etc., and recommended the people to vote for a convention. The address is not what might have been expected

broken up. I attended court at Bellevue, a few days after this fight took place, which was on April 1st, 1840. People had come to the "seat of war" from all parts of the county, and the most intense excitement prevailed. Nearly every man was armed to the teeth; freshly arrived from staid and sober New England, the sights I beheld were to me strange and curious. I stopped at the tavern, which had been kept by W. W. Brown, who was the leader of the gang, and who had been killed. My room-mate was Judge James Grant, of Davenport, who has been for nearly half a century one of the most distinguished citizens and lawyers of Iowa; when we were about to retire, what was my amazement to see my room-mate, whom I had never met before, draw out from under the back of his coat an immense bowie-knife and place it under his pillow. When abroad I wrote a letter to a friend in regard to this incident, and described Judge Grant's bowie-knife as being three feet long. This letter got into the newspapers. The Judge wrote me a letter to Paris, denying my statement, and asserting that the bowie-knife he had on that occasion was only *two feet long*. Col. Cox was one of the most imposing looking men I ever saw. He was six feet tall; weighed two hundred and forty pounds, and would attract the attention of every one wherever he went. My friend, Col. W. A. Warren, of Bellevue, who settled in Jackson county about the same time as Col. Cox, speaks of him as an able and popular man, with many excellent qualities, but whose usefulness was impaired by his unfortunate habits. He died on his farm near the town of Maquoketa in 1843, and his family afterwards removed to Los Angelos, California.

from the able and distinguished men on the committee to draw it up. They felt that policy dictated that the real question at issue—freedom or slavery in Illinois—should be obscured, and hence reasons for a change in the Constitution, which nobody cared anything about, were amplified and general principles stated in high-sounding and pompous phrase, while the real reason was studiously concealed. This address could have had no great effect, while the bold and manly "Appeal" of the anti-slavery men was well calculated to awaken public attention and arouse public feeling.*

The truth is, that the first constitution, which was now sought to be changed, was, in its main features, a good one, and the mass of the people were satisfied with it. They had never manifested any particular desire for a change until after the pro-slavery

* It is somewhat remarkable that while so large and influential a portion of the people of Illinois, and some of them, the most prominent men from the free States, were laboring to make Illinois a slave State, some distinguished Southern men were opposed to the whole scheme. I find in an autograph letter of Wm. H. Crawford, who was then so prominent as a candidate for President, written to Governor Coles June 14th, 1823, the following: "Is it possible that your Convention is intended to introduce slavery into the State? I acknowledge if I were a citizen I should oppose it with great earnestness; where it has ever been introduced it is extremely difficult to get rid of, and ought to be treated with great delicacy." This declaration so honorable to Mr. Crawford, a slave-holder, then Secretary of war, and one of the most distinguished citizens of the South, should have crimsoned the cheeks of the dough-faces of Illinois of that day.

demagogues in the Legislature had initiated the project for a revision. It was then suddenly discovered that the fundamental law of the State was an ill-digested jungle of faults, either containing or lacking provisions necessary to the prosperity of the State and the happiness of the people. Unfortunately, at this time, there was a general discontent among the people of the State. A scapegoat was wanted. It was the existing constitution and it was necessary to change it. The times were hard. The farmer could find no market for his abundant crops. Manufactures languished, improvements were at a standstill, and the mechanic was without work. The country was cursed by a fluctuating and irredeemable paper currency, which had driven all *real* money out of circulation. The flow of emigration to the State had in a great measure ceased, but a great emigration passed through the State to Missouri. Great numbers of well-to-do emigrants from the slave States, taking with them their slaves, were then leaving their homes to find new ones west of the Mississippi. When passing through Illinois to their destination, with their well equipped emigrant wagons, drawn by splendid horses, with their retinue of slaves, and with all the lordly airs of that class of slaveholders,

they avowed that their only reason for not settling in Illinois was that they could not hold their slaves. This fact had a very great influence, particularly in that part of the State through which the emigration passed, and people denounced the unwise provision of the constitution prohibiting slavery, and thus preventing a great influx of population, to add to the wealth of the State.

CHAPTER XII.

CONVENTION CONTEST COMMENCES; THE MOST REMARKABLE EVER IN THE STATE; ITS VIOLENCE AND BITTERNESS; EVERYBODY ENTERS INTO IT; DESCRIPTION OF IT BY GOVERNORS FORD AND REYNOLDS AND WM. H. BROWN; HOSTILITY TOWARDS GOVERNOR COLES; INSULTING DEMAND UPON HIM BY THE SENATE; HIS DIGNIFIED AND CONCLUSIVE RESPONSE; REJECTION OF HIS NOMINATIONS; LETTER TO JOHN G. LOFTON.

THE Legislature had adjourned, and both parties had issued their manifestoes. The members and the great number of the prominent men of the State who had been attracted to Vandalia during the struggle, had gone to their homes. The two parties were now to meet face to face to decide the question before a tribunal from which there could be no appeal. Fortunately there was ample time for discussion, and voices could not be stifled as they had been in the Legislature. Under the constitution the vote of the people on the Convention Resolution could not take place until the next election of members of General Assembly, which would be on the first Monday of August, 1824, a long period of eighteen months.

There now commenced one of the most remarkable contests that was ever fought out at the hust-

ings in this country. The pro-slavery men had defiantly thrown down the gauntlet, and the anti-slavery men took it up with equal defiance. The conflict was long and bitter, and no quarter was given on either side. There were not only the strong men of both parties, orators, judges, lawyers, but the rank and file of people entered into the struggle with a violence, a zeal, and a determination alike without limit and without example, in the State. There was a perfect avalanche of personalities, threats and denunciations, and Governor Ford well says that had not the people made allowance for all the exaggerations and falsehoods, the reputations of all men would have been overwhelmed and consumed. "Newspapers, hand-bills and pamphlets, were scattered broadcast. These missive weapons of a fiery contest were scattered everywhere, and everywhere they scorched and scathed as they flew. Almost every stump in every county had its bellowing, indignant orator on one side or the other, and the whole people, for the space of months, did scarcely anything but read newspapers, hand-bills and pamphlets, quarrel, wrangle and argue with each other whenever they met together to hear the violent harangues of their orators."—(*Ford's History of Illinois.*)

The following is the account given of this celebrated contest, by Governor Reynolds in his history, "My Own Times:"

"The convention question gave rise to two years of the most furious and boisterous excitement and contest that ever was visited on Illinois. Men, women and children entered the arena of party warfare and strife, and the families and neighborhoods were so divided and furious and bitter against one another, that it seemed a regular civil war might be the result. Many personal combats were indulged in on the question, and the whole country seemed, at times, to be ready and willing to resort to physical force to decide the contest. All the means known to man to convey ideas to one another were resorted to, and practised with energy. The press teemed with publications on the subject. The stump-orators were invoked, and the pulpit thundered anathemas against the introduction of slavery. The religious community coupled freedom and christianity together, which was one of the most powerful levers used in the contest. At one meeting of the friends of freedom in St. Clair county, more than thirty preachers of the gospel attended and opposed the introduction of slavery into the State."

The Hon. WILLIAM H. BROWN, a former president of the Chicago Historical Society, in his admirable sketch of the "Early Movement in Illinois for the Legalization of Slavery," read before the Society December 5, 1864, thus speaks of the great contest:

"The struggle which now commenced, and was con-

tinued through the succeeding eighteen months, was one of no ordinary character. Our previous elections had been conducted with warmth and zeal; but into this canvass was infused a bitterness and malignity which the agitation of the Slavery question only engenders. Why it always produces this result, is worthy of the investigation of the moralist and philosopher. Other great evils, political or moral, are discussed with freedom, and measures for their amelioration or prevention meet with no outward opposition; but call in question the right of one man to enslave another, or even make an effort to confine this gigantic sin to the territory in which it exists, and the fiercest passions are aroused in the hearts of its advocates, and the lack of power alone saves their opponents from utter destruction.

In this spirit was the contest of 1823–4 waged. Old friendships were sundered, families divided and neighborhoods arrayed in opposition to each other. Threats of personal violence were frequent, and personal collisions a common occurrence. As in times of warfare, every man expected an attack, and was prepared to meet it. Pistols and dirks were in great demand, and formed a part of the personal habiliments of all those conspicuous for their opposition to the Convention measure. Even the gentler sex came within the vortex of this whirlwind of passion; and many were the angry disputations of those whose cares and interests were usually confined to their household duties."

The hostility of the pro-slavery men, both in and out of the legislature, toward Governor Coles, was intense during the winter of 1822–3. It culminated in mobbing his residence after the legis-

lature adjourned. It was the high character of the Governor, the great influence he began to exercise over public opinion, and his intense anti-slavery proclivities, which made him as much hated as feared. No violence or abuse had any effect upon him, but he pursued the even tenor of his way, always maintaining the dignity of his position, but never slackening his efforts nor abating his zeal.

It was in the height of the contest on the Convention Resolution in the Legislature that the Senate made an impudent demand on the Governor. It was not enough to respectfully request him, but it showed its *animus* in passing a curt resolution which "*required*" him to lay certain papers before that body. This unwarranted, not to say insulting, action of the Senate, was promptly met by the following message from the Governor, which showed how ridiculous was the assumption of the honorable Senators :

MESSAGE OF GOVERNOR COLES TO THE SENATE.

To the Senate of the State of Illinois:

I have received a Resolution from the Senate, by which "the Governor is required to lay before the Senate all the recommendations of all the persons recommended for the offices of Recorder of the counties of Morgan and Fulton." In consequence of the novel and unprecedented nature of this Resolution, I have given the sub-

ject great consideration, and with every disposition to comply, not only with whatever the Senate has a right to *require*, but with every reasonable request it may express, I feel myself constrained, under my impressions of the relative constitutional powers of the Senate and the Executive, to decline complying with the requisition contained in the above resolution.

The Constitution of this State, the source from whence the powers and duties as well of the Senate as of the Governor are derived, declares that "the Governor shall nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoint all officers whose offices are established by this Constitution, or shall be established by law, and whose appointments are not herein otherwise provided for." By a fair construction of this provision, it seems that it is the province of the Governor to nominate, and of the Senate to advise and consent, or not to advise and consent to the nomination; and a judicious exercise of this power, on the part of the Senate, it is conceived, is abundantly sufficient to guard the State against the appointment of persons whose character and qualifications are not such as to render them good and useful officers. The power of the Senate being thus expressly confined to approving or rejecting nominations, it is not known by what authority it derives the right to require of the Governor all the recommendations of the persons named, much less those of all the others who may have been recommended; a precedent for which, it is believed, cannot be found in the proceedings of the Federal Government, or the Government of any of the States whose Constitution contains a similar provision. Indeed, such an authority could not be exercised by the Senate without greatly abridging the constitutional powers of the Governor in making his selections.

If the Senate is to be governed, or its decisions influenced, by the *written* evidence which might be in the hands of the Governor, it would very frequently act on imperfect and very different data from that which probably decided him in making the nomination, as it is well known that most recommendations to office are made verbally, and the Governor occasionally nominates or appoints an individual from his own personal knowledge of his character and qualifications.

EDWARD COLES.

February 14, 1823.

The following letter of Governor Coles to John G. Lofton, illustrates the vindictive feeling of the Senate towards the Governor:

VANDALIA, Feb. 16, 1823.

Dear Sir:—Being very sensible of the strong claims you have on the State from your long residence, the many valuable services you have rendered it, and the justly high character you have acquired from your honorable and manly conduct; in one word, believing there was no man who had stronger claims or better qualifications, I have been induced from these considerations, as well as the pleasure I felt in giving you a proof of my high respect and sincere regard, to nominate you to the Senate as recorder for the county of Fulton. In these times of party heat, when the worst feelings are enlisted in the worst of causes; when the friends of freedom are oppressed, denounced and proscribed by the friends of Slavery—in such a time, I say, as this, I felicitated myself in having been able to select an individual so perfectly fitted in qualification, and so perfectly unexceptionable in character, that I had not supposed that the blackest

demon of faction could have raised his head against him, but in this I was mistaken, for on yesterday the Senate, to my inexpressible surprise, rejected your nomination. I have done you the justice to state that you had not applied for the office, but that I had been induced to nominate you purely from my regard for you, and from a conviction of your pre-eminent claims and qualifications, and that I thought the emoluments of the office would be such as to induce you to accept it; and that I was the more confirmed in my belief of your acceptance, from the circumstance of your not having yet purchased the place on which you now reside. This statement of the reasons for my nominating you is due to you as well as to myself. The regret I feel at your rejection would greatly be increased if I should find that you were mortified at it, and it would be especially painful to me if I should have done what may prove displeasing to you. As I write in haste, I must conclude by assuring you of my great respect and sincere regard.

EDWARD COLES.

J. G. LOFTON, Esq.

P. S. Not having had an opportunity of forwarding this letter, I have opened it to add that since your rejection I have nominated to the Senate, Pascal P. Enos, who has also been rejected—after which I nominated O. M. Ross, of Fulton county, which nomination the Senate neither rejected nor confirmed, but adjourned this evening *precipitately* without having given previous notice of their intention, either to the House of Representatives or to the Governor. I refer you to the gentleman who will hand you this for an account of the late extraordinary proceeding here.

FEB. 18th. E. C.

CHAPTER XIII.

GOVERNOR COLES THE LEADER OF THE ANTI-CONVENTION FORCES; HIS INTENSE EARNESTNESS; LETTER TO RICHARD FLOWER; RELATIONS BETWEEN GOVERNOR COLES AND NICHOLAS BIDDLE; CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THEM; BIDDLE INTRODUCES GOVERNOR COLES TO ROBERTS VAUX, OF PHILADELPHIA, MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS; NOTICE OF ROBERTS VAUX; HIS GREAT SERVICES TO THE ANTI-CONVENTION CAUSE; CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN COLES AND VAUX; ANOTHER LETTER OF MR. BIDDLE TO GOVERNOR COLES.

AFTER the adjournment of the Legislature, Governor Coles addressed himself with great earnestness to the task which confronted him, as the acknowledged leader of the anti-convention forces. There were a large number of able men all over the State who devoted their time and talents to the great cause, but the position of Governor Coles, his residence at the seat of government, his prestige as an anti-slavery man, and his ability as a writer, placed him in the very front rank of the anti-convention men. He took steps to get control of the only newspaper published in Vandalia at the time, and entered into correspondence with the leading men in the State and elsewhere, opposed to the convention. The following letter of Governor Coles, to Richard Flower, shows how intensely earnest he

was and with what a lofty spirit he was animated. Mr. Flower was an Englishman and one of the founders of the English colony of Edwards county.*

* This letter of Governor Coles will naturally awaken an interest in Edwards county, and some of its pioneers who fought with the Governor the great battle against slavery. Edwards county has an interesting history. It was organized while Illinois was yet a Territory, and named Edwards county, after its Territorial Governor, Ninian Edwards. It embraced all the country north of White county, on the eastern side of the State. The English colony that settled in the county prior to 1820, gave great character to it by reason of the distinguished men who composed it. They named the county seat "Albion." Much is said in this Paper of Morris Birkbeck, who with Richard and George Flower, was the founder of the "English settlement." The Flowers were men of wealth and education, and strongly Republican in sentiment, and intensely anti-slavery. The letter of Governor Coles to Richard Flower shows the high estimate he placed on his influence. Before coming to Illinois he had spent a year at Lexington, Kentucky, having been induced to settle there by Mr. Clay. He would have made his home in the "Blue Grass Region," but his hatred of slavery induced him to leave it and emigrate to Illinois, where his son, George Flower, had preceded him. George Flower was a man of mark and influence in his day and generation, well known in Europe as well as in this country. He spent one winter with Thomas Jefferson, at Monticello, and was for two or three months the guest of Henry Clay, at Ashland. He was in correspondence of many distinguished literary and political men. In 1860, with a thoughtful liberality, he presented to the Chicago Historical Society many original letters addressed to him by Lafayette, Jefferson, Cobbett, the Abbe Gautier, the Count de Lasteyrie, D. Macdonald, then of New Harmony, Indiana (since Lord of the Isles and Earl of Skye), and other distinguished persons. All these valuable letters were consumed by the fire which destroyed Chicago in 1871.

Benjamin Flower, the brother of Richard, never came to this country, but remained in England. He was a literary man and politician. An ultra-republican, he was once sent to the tower of London for a speech he made in advocacy of his doctrines His daughter, Sarah Flower Adams, was the auther of the popular hymn, "Nearer, my God, to thee."

Letter of Governor Coles to Richard Flower.

VANDALIA, April 12, 1823.

Dear Sir:—I would have made my acknowledgments to you long since for your kind letter of 13th of February, but for my having been prevented from writing by the bearer of it, from the haste with which he took his departure hence, and for my being much harassed by the business attendant on the approaching adjournment of the Legislature; and for my having gone soon after the adjournment to Edwardsville, where I was detained until a few days since by torrents of rain which have deluged the country and rendered the streams and roads impassable. The perusal of your letter afforded me particular pleasure. It breathes the genuine sentiments of a Republican and of a philanthropist; and produced an emotion which was "pleasing though mournful to the soul." Pleasing that an adopted citizen should possess principles so entirely accordant with our free institutions; and as it held out encouragement that the people would not sanction the late conduct and measures of their Representatives—mournful, that if the slave faction should succeed, how unpleasant and truly unfortunate the situation of many of us, who have removed from a great distance and invested our all in property which we shall be compelled to abandon or to sacrifice, to seek new homes we know not where; or remain in a community whose principles and practice are not only entirely at variance with our own, but of a character calculated daily to harrow up our feelings in the most painful way. I was born in the very bosom of negro slavery; have seen it in all its bearings; reflected well upon the nature of it, and having found it impossible to reconcile it either with my political or religious creed, I abandoned my native State,

my aged parents and relations, to seek in this State a community whose principles and practice I presumed were in unison with my own. Judge, then, of my feelings at the efforts which have been made and are now making to change this free community of ours into a truly odious one, consisting of masters and slaves—and you can judge the better as your situation and principles are very similar with mine. The great inducement with us both to emigrate to this State was the firm belief that we should not be disturbed by the clanking of the fetters of Slavery; that tyranny would not be given a legal sanction, nor afforded the food on which it could prey. But the majority of the people's representatives, having by the most violent and unprecedented measure, taken a step with the view of breaking down those barriers to oppression, which had been erected by the wisdom and virtue of those who framed the fundamental law of the State, and which you and many of us considered, if not sacred, at least to have been permanently settled, it becomes us to be on the alert to defeat a measure, which if it should succeed, will not only be ruinous, and in the highest degree unjust to many of us who have emigrated here under the most solemn assurance that "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude" should exist; but it will be of incalculable injury to the interest of the State, of the Union, and of the extension and advancement of freedom, and the amelioration of the human race.

You reside in a favorable situation to aid with effect this great question. The county just below you forms the dividing line between the sections of country in which the free and slave parties predominate. It has occurred to me that the friends of freedom would give ample support, and that the good cause would be greatly promoted by establishing a printing press on the

Eastern side of the State. And I know of no place where it could be established to so much advantage, as at Albion. Besides the advantage it has in locality, there are in Albion, and its vicinity, many persons who wield chaste and powerful pens, and who have the means, and, I trust, the disposition of patronizing an establishment of the kind. Pardon me for asking it as a favor to me personally, and as a sacrifice to the furtherance of the best and most virtuous of causes, that all personal, sectional, national, county or town feelings, and all other unkind feelings, let them originate from what cause they may, shall be buried, at least while the great question is pending. I will write and ask the same favor of Mr. Birkbeck. I have but little news. From all I can learn a considerable majority of the people of the counties situated in the north-west part of the State, as far south as Monroe, St. Clair and Washington, are opposed to a call of a convention, but great and extraordinay efforts are already making to induce the people to vote for it.

Present my respectful compliments to Mrs. F. and family, and to your son and his lady, and be assured of my respect and esteem.

EDWARD COLES.

To RICHARD FLOWER, ESQ.,
Albion, Edwards County, Ill.

I have spoken of the relations existing between Governor Coles and Nicholas Biddle. In view of the struggle which the Governor had entered upon in Illinois for the purpose of defeating the introduction of slavery into the State, and from the necessity of obtaining help whenever it could be

had in aid of the work, he addressed the following letter to Mr. Biddle:

Governor Coles to Nicholas Biddle.

VANDALIA, Illinois, April 22, 1823.

Dear Sir:—It has been a long time since I either wrote to you or heard from you. I made a visit last summer to my relations in Virginia, and intended to have extended my tour as far as Philadelphia, which I should certainly have done, for I am still more attached to Philadelphia than any other city in the Union, but for my trip having been delayed by a severe attack of bilious fever, and having been prolonged in Virginia beyond the time I expected, and the necessity I was under to be back here by the meeting of the Legislature, to enter on the duties of the office to which I had been recently elected. I assure you, when about to leave Washington (where I staid only four or five days) and to turn my face to the west, there was a great struggle between a sense of duty which dragged me here, and my inclinations and many strong attractions which drew me to your charming city. There has long existed in this State a strong party in favor of altering the constitution and making it a slave-holding State; while there is another party in favor of a convention to alter the constitution, but deny that Slavery is their object. These two parties have finally, by the most unprecedented and unwarrantable proceedings (an account of which you have no doubt seen in the newspapers), succeeded in passing a resolution requiring the sense of the people to be taken at the next general election (August, 1824,) on the propriety of calling a convention for the purpose of altering the constitution. Knowing that this measure would be strenuously urged during the late session of the Legisla-

ture, and that many who professed to be hostile to the further introduction of Slavery, would advocate it, and believing that it would have a salutary effect to furnish them an opportunity of evincing the sincerity of their professions; and being also urged by a strong sense of the obligations imposed on me, by my principles and feelings, to take notice of the subject, I called the attention of the Legislature in a speech I delivered on being sworn into office (a printed copy of which I sent you by mail) to the existence of Slavery in the State, in violation of the great fundamental principles of the ordinance, and recommended that just and equitable provision be made for its abrogation. As I anticipated, this part of my speech created a considerable excitement with those who were openly or secretly in favor of making Illinois a slave-holding, rather than making it really as well as nominally, a free State—who wished to fill it rather than empty it of slaves. Never did I see or hear in America of party spirit going to such lengths, as well officially as privately, as it did here on this question. Indeed, it seems to me that Slavery is so poisonous as to produce a kind of delirium in those minds who are excited by it. This question, and the manner of carrying it, is exciting great interest throughout the State, and has already kindled an extraordinary degree of excitement and warmth of feeling, which will no doubt continue to increase until the question is decided I assure you, I never before felt so deep an interest in any political questtion. It preys upon me to such a degree, that I shall not be happy or feel at ease until it is settled. It is impossible to foresee the injurious effects resulting to this State or the unhappy consequences which may arise to the Union, from the success of the slave party in this State. Many of us who immigrated to this State under the

solemn assurance that there should exist here "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude," will, if the slave faction succeeds, be compelled to sacrifice or abandon our property and seek new homes, we know not where, or remain in a community whose principles we shall disapprove of, and whose practice will be abhorrent to our feelings. And already we hear disputed the binding effect of the ordinance—the power of Congress to restrict a State, etc., etc., from which I fear, if the introduction of Slavery should be tolerated here, the discussions on the expediency and unconstitutionality of the measure will not in all probability be confined to the citizens of this State. But this is a part of the question too painful for me to dwell on. I trust the good sense and virtue of the citizens of Illinois will never sanction a measure so well calculated to disturb the harmony of the Union and so injurious to its own prosperity and happiness, as well as so directly opposite to the progress of those enlightened and liberal principles which do honor to the age. But to insure this it is necessary that the public mind should be enlightened on the moral and political effects of Slavery. You will confer a particular favor on me and promote the virtuous cause in which I am enlisted, by giving me information, or referring me to the sources from whence I can draw it, calculated to elucidate the general character and effects of Slavery—its moral, political and social effects—facts showing its effects on the price of lands, and general improvement and appearance of a country—of labor both as it respects agriculture and manufactures, etc., etc. The State of Pennsylvania having been long distinguished for its attachment to free principles, there is no doubt but what you can procure in Philadelphia many valuable pamphlets and publications which would throw light on this ques-

tion. Any which you may have it in your power to procure and forward, will be most thankfully received, and the amount of the expense repaid as soon as it is known. Your old and truly sincere friend,

EDWARD COLES.

To NICHOLAS BIDDLE, ESQ.,
President of the Bank of the United States,
Philadelphia.

Mr. Biddle to Governor Coles.

PHILADELPHIA, May 20, 1823.

Dear Sir: I have just received your friendly letter of the 22nd ult., to which I shall take the first moment of leisure to give a more detailed answer. In the meantime I can only say that I feel most sincerely the embarrassment of your situation, and hope that you may be able to triumph in the good cause. That no effort may be wanting, you shall have all the assistance which I can give or procure. My occupations necessarily absorb so much of my time that I can promise you little on my part, personally, but I have already engaged two of our most active gentlemen familiar with that subject, who will cheerfully and zealously contribute to your support. The first fruit of their labor is the pamphlet accompanying this letter. I have not had time to read it, as I am anxious to forward it without delay, but I understand that it is the latest and best work on the subject, and goes directly to the question of the superiority of free over slave labor. Mrs. B. and Mr. Craig are glad to hear of your prosperity, and desire to be particularly remembered to you.

With great sincerity of regard,

yrs.,

N. BIDDLE.

EDWARD COLES, ESQ.,
Vandalia.

Mr. Biddle to Governor Coles.

PHILADELPHIA, May 26, 1823.

My Dear Sir: My present occupations necessarily engross so much of my time that I can scarcely contribute more than my good wishes to the great cause which so naturally and deeply interests you. It gives me peculiar satisfaction, therefore, to procure for you the correspondence of my friend, Mr. Roberts Vaux, to whom this note is intended to serve as an introduction. Mr. Vaux is a gentleman of education, talents, fortune, leisure and high standing in the community. He feels sensibly all the embarrassments of your situation; he perceives the deep importance of defeating this first effort to extend to the north-western country the misfortunes of the slave population, and he is disposed to co-operate warmly and zealously with you. I know of no individual more calculated to render you the most efficient service. He is worthy of all your confidence, and I recommend to you to yield it to him implicitly, as I am sure it will be repaid by every kindness and every service in his power.

With great esteem and regard,

yrs.,

N. BIDDLE.

EDWARD COLES, ESQ.,
Vandalia,
Illinois.

This letter of Governor Coles to Mr. Biddle was the means of bringing the Governor and Mr. Roberts Vaux into communication, as will be seen by the following letter:

Mr. Biddle to Governor Coles.

PHILADELPHIA, May 26, 1823.

My Dear Sir: I have put into the hands of my friend, Mr. Vaux, a note for you which he will accompany with a communication on the subject which now occupies you. Mr. Vaux will be hearty and zealous in the cause, and I really deem it a subject of congratulation to you, to procure the assistance of one who is more able and willing than any individual of my acquaintance to assist you. There is one thing which I wish to add. The Abolition Society of this city, has been the subject, whether justly or not I am unable to determine, of much hostility at a distance, and it would be rather injurious than beneficial to have it supposed that the society was active in the cause which you are supporting. You will therefore understand that neither the Abolition Society nor any other society has the least concern in this matter. The simple fact is that Mr. Vaux, and two or three of his friends, have been so much pleased with your past conduct in relation to Slavery, and have so deep a sense of their duty to resist the extension of that system, that they mean to volunteer in assisting you, without any connections with any set of men, and without any motives which the most honorable might not be proud to avow.

Very sincerely,

yrs.,

N. BIDDLE.

EDWARD COLES, ESQ.,
Vandalia,
Illinois.

Mr. Vaux having thus been introduced by Mr.

Biddle, he addressed the following letter to Governor Coles.*

PHILADELPHIA, 5 Mo. 27, 1823.

To EDWARD COLES, ESQ.:

Esteemed Friend:—My friend, Nicholas Biddle has kindly furnished me with a note of introduction to thy correspondence, which is transmitted by the mail that conveys this letter. I have been induced thus to solicit access to thy notice, because thy conduct in relation to the emancipation of thy slaves could not fail to beget

* The perusal of the letters of Roberts Vaux to Governor Coles, cannot fail to awaken a real interest among the people of Illinois. I am glad to publish them, as showing the deep and unselfish interest this remarkable man took in preserving the soil of Illinois to freedom. He was the type of a class of men ("Friends") in Philadelphia, whose names and deeds have illustrated the history of that city. Roberts Vaux was born in Philadelphia, January 21, 1786, and died January 7, 1836, and while holding the position of Associate Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, for the city and county of Philadelphia. Blessed with health and competence, he pursued a career marked by honor, benevolence and usefulness. Mr. Thomas McKean Pettit in his memoir, justly says of him, "The vigor of a fine intellect, with stores of useful information, a knowledge of men and business, obtained by judicious observation and careful training, which combined, could have been successfully exerted in the acquisition of wealth, or the gratification of political ambition, were all employed for the benefit of the human race."

In reference to the great services rendered by Mr. Vaux, in a letter of acknowledgment, Governor Coles thus writes to him: "Such noble, generous and fervid benevolence as yours is highly honorable, even to a *Friend*, and is a new and striking proof of that extended philanthropy, and pure, and heaven-born spirit of Brotherly love, by which that denomination of Christians has ever been distinguished."

The part which Mr. Biddle took in this great controversy, and the timely assistance he rendered, deserves to be remembered to his credit, and will soften the prejudice which was excited against him as the President of the United States Bank.

great respect for an individual whose noble, and generous example displayed so much practical wisdom, and Christian benevolence. Nor has it been less gratifying to be informed of thy official efforts to prevent the overthrow of those constitutional barriers, which were erected to protect the State of Illinois, from the moral, and political evils inseparable from domestic slavery.

It is really astonishing, that any part of the inhabitants of your State should wish to introduce a system which is generally reprobated where its effects have been longest known, and from the dominion of which, such of our fellow citizens of the South as are disposed to examine the subject with the gravity which it certainly merits, most anxiously desire to be redeemed.

Notwithstanding, however, the lessons which experience has taught in this respect, it is likely that Illinois will be agitated by the exertions of unreflecting men, and possibly without timely and energetic efforts to counteract their schemes, they may be enabled to persuade a majority of her people to violate their early vows on this subject, and pollute your soil with the blood and tears of slaves.

Feeling as I do, a deep sympathy for thyself, thus threatened with the most unhappy consequences, and desirous that miseries and mischiefs, the amount of which no mind can fully calculate, may be averted from the extensive and fair region of which Illinois forms a part, I would willingly contribute anything in my power, and with these views I offer my own, and the services of a few of my friends, in this interesting cause.

We have thought that benefit might result from making judicious selections from writers whose purpose is to show the iniquity, and impolicy of slavery—these selections to be printed in the *Tract form* (at our own

expense) and forwarded to Illinois for gratuitous distribution. If this plan should meet thy approbation, I should be glad to receive an early intimation to that effect, but should thy official station, or duties, render it either improper or inconvenient for thee to take an active part in this business, perhaps it will be in thy power to select a few individuals who may be disposed to aid us, and in that event, I shall be obliged by thy introduction of such persons to my correspondence.

Accept the salutation of my respect,

ROBERTS VAUX.

The above letter of Mr. Vaux was answered by Governor Coles, as follows:

EDWARDSVILLE, ILLINOIS, JUNE 27, 1823.

Esteemed Friend:

Your kind and highly interesting letter of the 27th ult. was rec'd by the last mail, and has been perused with very great pleasure. The benevolent sentiments you express, and the correct views you take of the great question which is now unfortunately agitating this State, and the deep interest you evince for the prosperity and happiness of Illinois, and the preservation of the rights and liberty of its inhabitants, do credit alike to the native benevolence of your heart and to those divine and political principles which distinguish the real Christian and Republican, and cannot fail to present a contrast, which, however mortifying it may be to me as an Illinoisan, cannot but be highly gratifying to me as a man, to see one so far removed from the scene, and without any other interest except that which he feels in the general happiness of his species, nobly and generously volunteering his services to assist in promoting the cause of

humanity, whilst there are thousands here strenuously advocating the giving a legal sanction to the oppression and abject slavery of their fellow-creatures. Such noble, generous, and fervid benevolence as yours, is highly honorable even to a *Friend;* and is a new and striking proof of that extended philanthropy, and pure and heaven-born spirit of Brotherly love, by which that denomination of Christians have ever been distinguished, and cannot fail to excite the admiration and win the confidence and attachment of all—especially of those like myself, who daily experience pain and mortification in hearing doctrines advanced which are directly in opposition to the great fundamental truths of our religious and political creeds.

In behalf of the friends of freedom in this State, I give you sincere and grateful thanks for the offer of your services to assist us to enlighten the minds of our fellow citizens, by publishing judicious selections and observations on the iniquity and impolicy of Slavery, in *tract form*, and distributing them gratuitously through the State. It may be proper, however, to remark that distant friends should be cautious in the manner of making their benevolent exertions, as there is danger that designing partisans here may not only paralyze the effort, but turn it against the cause it was intended to promote, by representing it to be the interference of other States for the purpose of influencing the opinion of the people of this. An ingenious pen could dress up this subject in a manner to give it great effect in this country. Would it not, therefore, be best not to state on the face of the publications where they were printed? They could be printed in Philadelphia, and sent with the goods of some merchant of St. Louis at a much less expense than by mail.

Not being aware of any consideration which should restrain me, but on the contrary believing that my present office increases the obligations I am under, as a good citizen, to exert myself to enlighten the minds of my fellow citizens, and strenuously to oppose every measure which I am convinced is unjust in principle or injurious in its effects, and believing Slavery to be both iniquitous and impolitic, I conceive myself bound, both as a citizen and as an officer, to do all in my power to prevent its introduction into this State. I will therefore cheerfully render you assistance in distributing any publications you may forward, or give you any information you may desire.

The friends of freedom here propose making publication similar to those you suggest, but they will not have the same means of doing justice to the subject that you will have in Philadelphia. We are particularly anxious, not only to present to the people proper views of the immoral and anti-christian, unjust and anti-republican character of Slavery, but also *facts* showing its impolicy and injurious effects in retarding the settlement and prosperity of the State, by checking emigration to it, and paralyzing the enterprise and activity of its citizens —that it would impede the progress of manufactures, be prejudicial to agriculture, and in one word, to the future prosperity, as well as to the immediate interest of the State. The great argument here in favor of the introduction and toleration of Slavery, is that it would have the immediate effect of raising the price of lands, and adding to the population and wealth of the country. We want *facts* to disprove these assertions, and also to show that Slavery would operate to the injury of the poor or laboring classes of society. Strange as it may appear, it is nevertheless true, that there are many per-

sons who are in principle opposed to Slavery who will yet vote for making this a slave-holding State, under the belief that by so doing they will be enabled to make an immediate and advantageous sale of their lands, and thus gratify that restless and rambling disposition which is so common with frontier settlers.

Pardon this long and hasty letter. Give my regards to our mutual friend Biddle, and be assured that your generous benevolence has inspired me with great respect and sincere regard for you.

EDWARD COLES.

ROBERTS VAUX,
Philadelphia.

Roberts Vaux to Governor Coles.

BIRWOOD LODGE (near Phil'a), 7 Mo. 24, 1823.

Esteemed Friend:—I cannot delay an immediate acknowledgment of thy letter of the 27th ultimo, which reached me at my summer residence to-day.

It affords me unfeigned satisfaction to learn from it that thee approves the plan which I submitted for thy consideration. Anticipating a favorable notice of the suggestion, by a mind so devoted as thine to the promotion of the great ends of humanity, of justice, and of National honor, three pamphlets were prepared, which will be immediately printed, and transmitted to thy address at St. Louis. One of these tracts is designed to show the impolicy and unprofitableness of Slave Labor, etc., and some arguments are drawn from the published opinions of several distinguished citizens *of the slave-holding States;* among which Col. Taylor's are not the least authoritative and cogent. Another essay exhibits a succinct account of the cruelties of the Slave Trade, derived from authentic sources; and a third pamphlet is

intended to show that the interminable bondage of any portion of the human race is, on the part of the oppressors, a flagrant violation of natural and Divine Justice, and utterly inconsistent with the doctrines of our Holy Redeemer.

Aware of the unpopularity of Philadelphia, and especially of *Quaker* sentiments on this particular topic, with all those who attempt to justify slavery, it was originally determined to avoid giving any complexion whatever to these publications which might induce the belief that they proceeded from this State, or that individuals of the Society of Friends had any agency in the preparation of them. The coincidence of our judgment in regard to the manner of treating the subject is worthy of remark.

If the least benefit results from this humble effort, it will administer to my happiness, which will be augmented by the reflection, that it owes its origin to thy own emphatic summons for aid, in a cause which demands the exercise of every generous and patriotic feeling.

That indulgent Heaven may crown thy labors with success, is the sincere desire of thy friend.

With great truth and respect,

ROBERTS VAUX.

To EDWARD COLES, Esquire,
Governor of Illinois,
Edwardsville, Illinois.

P. S.—On my next visit to the city, I intend to communicate thy message to our friend Nicholas Biddle.

R. V.

Governor Coles to Mr. Biddle.

EDWARDSVILLE, Sept. 18, 1823.

Dear Sir:—I have been long anxious to return you my thanks for your kind letters of May 20th and 26th,

and also for the acceptable service you rendered me in making me known to Mr. Vaux, from whom I have had the pleasure of receiving two letters, and a promise of his assistance in preventing our soil from being polluted with the foul and disgraceful stain of slavery. The disinterested and praiseworthy zeal he evinces is as honorable to him, as it is gratifying to me, and is well calculated not only to give me an exalted opinion of his character, but to awaken the most lively feelings of regard and friendship for him. I wish, when you see him, you would tender him my kind regards and thanks for his letter of July 24, and say to him, I hope soon to receive the packages promised. The propriety of calling a convention, or more properly speaking, of making this a slave-holding State, is still discussed with considerable warmth, and continues to engage the undivided attention of the people, being the constant theme of conversation in every circle, and every newspaper teems with no other subject. Unfortunately for the friends of freedom, four out of five of the newspapers printed in this State are opposed to them; and the only press whose editor is in favor of freedom, although a pretty smart editor, has rendered himself unpopular with many by his foolish and passionate attacks upon many of the prominent men on his side of the question. If, however, the advocates of Slavery have the advantage of us in printing presses, we have greatly the advantage of them in possessing men of the most talents, and most able to wield the pen and use the press, with effect; and as three out of four of their presses have professed a willingness to admit well-written original essays on both sides of the question, we shall have not only the best of the argument, but be able, I trust, to present it in the best dress to the public. I am happy in telling you

that the advocates of a convention have been losing ground ever since the adjournment of the Legislature; and there is no doubt with me if the question were now to be decided, that a majority of the people would be opposed to it. But what will be the state of the parties next August is another question. Many of the people in this State are very fickle and credulous, and much can be done by designing and unprincipled partisans, and that everything which can possibly be done will be done, we cannot but infer from the extraordinary and unwarrantable measures resorted to last winter in the Legislature in getting up the question, and the great anxiety evinced, and exertions which have been made and are still making to prevail on the people to sanction it. But as the friends of freedom are aware of this, they will watch the movements of their opponents, and be on the alert to counteract their intrigues and machinations. The object for which a convention is wanted is so justly odious, and the conduct of the friends of the measure so disgraceful, that I cannot bring myself to believe they will succeed. But I regret to state that the advocates of Slavery in this State are gaining strength, from the indiscretion of the advocates of freedom out of the State. Certain leading newspapers in the Atlantic cities have taken a stand, and held language which is used here in a way calculated to do much mischief. Whether we have the constitutional right to make this a slave-holding State, or not, or whether the opponents of the extension of Slavery, here or elsewhere, may think proper hereafter to call for the interposition of the Federal Gov't to restrain the people of this State, it is certainly bad policy at this time very strongly to urge it, and especially in what may be considered dictatorial language; as it is of all other questions the

best calculated to arouse the feelings of State pride, and State rights, and that natural love of unrestrained liberty and independence which is common to our countrymen, and especially to our frontier settlers, who of all men in the world have the strongest jealousy of authority and aversion to restraint.

I wish, my friend, you would use your influence to prevail on the newspaper writers to let this question alone for the present. If they are sincere in their opposition to the further extension of Slavery, they will not prematurely urge it, when they are assured that by so doing they can do no good, but much harm.

I shall go to St. Louis in a day or two, when I hope to have the pleasure of seeing and congratulating your brother on his late marriage, and becoming acquainted with his lady. This has been the most cool and agreeable, and by far the most healthful summer I have ever seen in this country. The spring was too wet and we were apprehensive of an unfavorable season both for health and vegetation, but we have been most agreeably disappointed. My health was never better. I beg you to present my kind regards to Mrs. B., and to Mr. Craig, and to be assured of my sincere regard.

EDWARD COLES.

NICHOLAS BIDDLE, Esq.,
President of the bank of the U. S.—Philadelphia.

P. S.—Could you or Mr. Vaux furnish me with an assessment of lands in the different counties of Pennsylvania? I want to show that lands are higher in price in free than slave States.

Governor Coles to Roberts Vaux.

VANDALIA, ILLINOIS, DECEMBER 11, 1823.

Esteemed Friend:—I received some time since your

letter of the 11th of Oct., and by the last mail yours of the 4th ulto. An unusual press of public business prevented my sooner acknowledging the former, and will now prevent my making as long an answer to the two as I desire. For the last four weeks there has been a great crowd of persons here, attending the Circuit and Supreme Court of the State, and the U. S. and District Court and the sale at auction for taxes of about 7,000 tracts of land, belonging to non-resident proprietors. This has necessarily given me much to do; but it has at the same time afforded me an excellent opportunity of collecting the sense of the people on the great question which is now agitating the State. And I am happy in assuring you, from the best information I have been able to collect from all parts of the State, I am more confirmed in my belief that a majority of the people will be opposed to calling a convention for the purpose of altering the Constitution so as to make this a slave-holding State. But the extraordinary efforts that have been made here during the last three or four weeks by the friends of Slavery, in organizing their party, and enabling its leaders to act with the most concert and effect, convince the friends of freedom that their opponents are yet in the field, and that they should be on the alert, for fear by some *ruse de guerre*, at which their opponents are known from sad experience to be great adepts, the advocates of oppression should triumph. Nearly all the leading friends of a convention have been assembled here, and held caucuses for the purpose of deliberating upon the best means of promoting the success of their favorite measure; have adopted sundry resolutions, and made many arrangements; among others have appointed committees for each county in the State, and requested that the county committees appoint a committee in each township, for

the purpose of corresponding with each other, and of influencing by every possible means the public opinion.

With respect to your inquiry whether there is not some more expeditious and safe mode of sending out the pamphlets than through a commercial house at St. Louis, I can think of no other, except to forward them, as pamphlets, by mail to me to this place, which is at this season of the year slow and precarious.

The pamphlet you forwarded me by mail, along with your last letter, I received safe; but have been so busy as not yet to have had time to read it. Two thousand of each kind, will, I presume, be enough, and as many as I shall be able conveniently to distribute. There will be for the next six months, so few persons visiting this place, that I shall be compelled to rely chiefly on the mails, as the means of distributing pamphlets, or other information to the public. If possible, I intend to have all the pamphlets published in one or more of our weekly newspapers.

Accompanying this I send you a pamphlet, which has been lately published by my old friend Birkbeck, which is by far the best publication which has been yet given to the public. After you have perused it, you will confer a favor on me to loan it for the perusal of our mutual friend Biddle, to whom I beg you to present my kind regards.

With great respect and sincere regards, your friend,

EDWARD COLES.

To ROBERTS VAUX,

Philadelphia.

We have had the misfortune (two days since) to lose our State House by fire. This accident will operate in favor of a convention. Many profess to be opposed to Slavery but in favor of a convention to remove the seat of Government. There is now of course less inducement for keeping it here. I still, however, hope and believe we shall have no convention.

CHAPTER XIV.

INCREASING EXCITEMENT ON THE CONVENTION QUESTION; OPPOSITION MORE INTENSE; GENERAL WILLIS HARGRAVE; SECRET ORGANIZATION OF THE CONVENTION PARTY; EXPOSED BY A HAND-BILL; NEWSPAPERS IN THE STATE; RENCONTRE BETWEEN SMITH AND WARREN AT EDWARDSVILLE; LEADERS IN THE CONTEST ON BOTH SIDES; LABORS AND ACTIVITY OF THE ANTI-CONVENTION MEN, GOVERNOR COLES, REV. JOHN A. PECK, MORRIS BIRKBECK; NOTICE OF BIRKBECK; HIS ABILITY AS A WRITER; HIS SERVICES TO THE ANTI-CONVENTION CAUSE; CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN COLES AND BIRKBECK.

WITH the advent of the year 1824, the excitement on the Convention question increased. The more the question of making Illinois a slave State, was discussed in all its various phases, the more intense the opposition became. As this opposition increased, the efforts of the Convention party were redoubled. On the 6th of December, 1823, the "*Friends of a Convention,*" from all parts of the State, held a meeting at Vandalia, for the purpose of instituting a more perfect organization, of which General Willis Hargrave, the official Inspector of the Gallatin Saline, was the chairman. General Hargrave was a member of the House of Representatives from White county, in the Territorial Legislature, in the sessions of 1817–18, and a member of

the first Senate of the State in 1818–22, and was one of the boldest and most outspoken advocates for a convention in the State; while others temporized and hesitated, he openly advocated making Illinois a slave State. At this meeting committees were appointed, composed of the most efficient pro-Slavery men, for every county, but whose names were not made public. These committees were to appoint township committees for the purpose of a more complete organization. This action of the Convention men becoming known, was met by the anti-Convention men by a hand-bill, circulated over the State, in the early part of 1824, a copy of which is given as showing a somewhat ludicrous side of the contest:

"*By Authority!*

WHEREAS, certain evil disposed persons did, in the month of December last, assemble at Vandalia, and enter into a combination to control the freedom of election enjoyed by right by the good people of this State, in order to exclude from public service all citizens who are not of the Convention party, however suitable and well qualified they may be to promote the public interest; and for that purpose did presume to appoint certain secret committees of five of the said party in every county, who were to appoint sub-committees of three for every precinct, for carrying into effect the scheme as above mentioned; and, whereas, the first Monday of August next is set for the trial of the authors and abet-

tors of the said conspiracy against the sovereignty of the people, all good citizens are hereby required for the furtherance of political justice, to find out and detect, as far as in them lies, these *county and township committee men*, and to publish their proceedings in such manner as shall most effectually bring to light their underhand transactions. All newspapers that are friendly to freedom and independence are desired to give this notice a conspicuous place.

January, 1824. PRO BONO PUBLICO.

During this contest on the Convention question, there were but five weekly papers published in the State. Two of these were anti-Convention before the close of the contest; of them the "Illinois Intelligencer" published at Vandalia, the seat of Government, might be considered the leading one. It was at first a Convention paper, but was subsequently purchased by Governor Coles and other anti-Convention men, and placed under the editorial management of David Blackwell, a prominent lawyer of his time and Secretary of State under Governor Coles. The second was "The Spectator," at Edwardsville, edited by Hooper Warren. The first of these papers was not rallied to the anti-Convention cause till the contest was somewhat advanced. The Edwardsville Spectator was anti-Convention from the beginning, though its editor, Hooper Warren, was not friendly to Governor

Coles, and had opposed him in his election. The three papers advocating the Convention were the "Republican Advocate," at Kaskaskia, managed by Elias Kent Kane, afterwards U. S. Senator, Thomas Reynolds, subsequently Governor of Missouri, ex-GovernorBond and others, the "Illinois Gazette," at Shawneetown, and the Edwardsville paper, "The Republican," under the direction of Judge Theo. W. Smith, Emanuel J. West, Judge Samuel McRoberts, afterwards U. S. Senator, and others.

The controversy between the two papers in Edwardsville, representing Convention and anti-Convention, was waged with great violence. State Senator, Theophilus W. Smith, afterwards Judge of the Supreme Court, editor of the Convention paper, undertook to cowhide Hooper Warren, editor of the anti-Convention paper. Failing in his purpose he drew a dirk on him. Warren then pulled out his pistol, when the combatants were separated and "nobody hurt."

As before stated, the ablest, most prominent and most influential men of the State were champions of the Convention; among them, were ex-Governor Bond and six gentlemen who afterwards became United States Senators: Jesse B. Thomas, John

McLean, Elias Kent Kane, John M. Robinson, Samuel McRoberts and Richard M. Young; there were also, Chief Justice Phillips, of the Supreme Court, Wm. Kinney and Zadoc Casey, subsequently Lieut. Governors of the State, Colonel Alexander P. Field, Joseph A. Beaird, General Willis Hargrave, Emanuel J. West, Lieutenant-Governor Hubbard, John Reynolds, Justice of the Supreme Court, Thomas Reynolds, and others.

On the anti-Convention side, a great cause produced earnest and effective leaders. At their head was Governor Coles, entering heart and soul into the contest, carrying on an extensive correspondence with the anti-Convention men in all parts of the State, organizing opposition everywhere and wielding his facile and powerful pen in the newspapers. He not only expended his whole salary in the cause but contributed largely from his private means. But the man who accomplished the most against the Convention by personal exertion and by untiring work was the Rev. John M. Peck, of St. Clair county. Mr. Peck was a Baptist minister who emigrated to the West from Connecticut in 1817, and located in St. Clair county in 1821. He was a man of excellent education, of a strong and comprehensive mind and with an ener-

gy and perseverance rarely surpassed. The attempt to make the State of his adoption a slave State awakened in him the most intense feeling of opposition. Endowed with a strong constitution and great physical strength, he entered into a personal canvass against the Convention scheme and labored assiduously, in season and out of season, during the long campaign. He organized a society in St. Clair immediately after the passage of the Convention Resolution which adopted a constitution to resist the introduction of slavery into Illinois. Establishing his headquarters in St. Clair county, he extended his organization to fourteen other counties, establishing societies in each to act in unison with the parent society in St. Clair.* This organization, perfected and kept up by the exertions of Mr. Peck, was productive of great results to the anti-Convention cause. It was with the religious element of the community and with the clergy that he mostly labored. Uniting the establishment of Sunday schools and temperance societies with the distribution of the Bible, he preached a crusade against slavery wherever he went. It may be said to the eternal honor of the clergy of Illinois at that day, that they were almost without ex-

* "My Own Times," by John Reynolds.

ception, opposed to the Convention, and that they exercised great influence in securing the rejection of the Convention Resolution at the polls. The prevailing denominations in the State at that time were the Methodists and Baptists, and most of the preachers were from the slave States.

Next to Governor Coles and the Rev. Mr. Peck, the man who did the most in forming public opinion against the convention was MORRIS BIRKBECK, of Edwards county. The active part which Mr. Birkbeck took in the great struggle, and the inestimable services he rendered to the State in that vital epoch, are such as to entitle him to the gratitude of the people of Illinois. To-day, little is known of him or his works, and it is fitting that his name should be rescued from oblivion, and justice done to his memory. Edwards county could not do a more appropriate act than to erect a monument to his memory.

MORRIS BIRKBECK was born in Wanborough, England, in 1763. Receiving a most thorough classical education, he devoted himself to the study of agriculture. He soon came to enjoy a widespread celebrity as being one of the first practical as well as theoretical farmers in the kingdom.*

* Mr. Birkbeck was made the first president of the Illinois State Agricultural Society.

Making the acquaintance of many Americans in England, and among them Mr. Coles, when he was abroad in 1816, he came to the determination to emigrate to the United States, to use his own language, "in quest of a new settlement in the western wilderness." This settlement was made in the fall of 1817 in Edwards county, and it soon became known as the "English settlement."* Though Albion was the county seat, Mr. Birkbeck located adjoining thereto, and built up a town which he named Wanborough, after his native town in England. It was here that he was living when the Convention struggle broke out. Surrounded by his family, in companionship with his large and valuable library which he had brought with him from England, and overlooking the improvement of his settlement, he enlisted heartily in the anti-Convention cause as soon as the Convention Resolution had passed the Legislature. His son-in-law, Gilbert T. Pell, was a member of the lower branch of this Legislature, and strongly opposed the "call." Before this time, in his published "Letters from Illinois," Mr. Birkbeck had made known his views on slavery. In a letter

* Governor Reynolds says that "Mr. Birkbeck was the first literary man who settled in Illinois, and he had deservedly considerable reputation as a man of letters."

dated July 28, 1818, written to a friend in France, he says:

"In passing from theory to practice, I have experienced no diminution of my love for freedom; but I hate tyranny more cordially, and I want language to express the loathing I feel for personal slavery; practiced by freemen it is most detestable. It is the leprosy of the United States; a foul blotch which more or less contaminates the entire system, in public and in private, from the President's chair to the cabin of the hunter."*

The acquaintance of Governor Coles and Mr. Birkbeck made in England in 1816, ripened into a warm friendship after they both became citizens of Illinois. They were in complete sympathy on the slavery question generally, but the Convention struggle brought them still nearer together. The correspondence between them cannot fail to interest all who have followed the progress of the great struggle of that day.

Morris Birkbeck to Governor Coles.

WANBOROUGH, March 1, 1823.

My Dear Sir:—I have quite lost sight of St. Domingo. Clouds and darkness seem to overhang our own State too heavily to allow of my looking beyond it. Very

* "Letters from Illinois by Morris Birkbeck," author of "Notes on a Tour through France" and of "Notes on a Journey in America."

glad, indeed, should I be, could I hope to do anything, however little, to dispel them. The poor remainder of my life I would gladly devote to this cause. I am exceedingly desirous of seeing you to confer with you about our affairs. The disgusting scenes at Vandalia, occasioned by the unprincipled intrigues of the Slave party would afford a fine scope for the enemies of political freedom, to declaim against a representative Government; whereas, in truth, it is the only guard against the tyranny of such persons. If the *people* are absolutely corrupt and without principle, such men will gain their object under *any* system. Nothing is so destructive of moral character as Slavery; of this the transactions of our Legislature are a fresh illustration. Day and night this miserable subject is before me. I foresee that, if I live till next year, I must attempt, with my pen, my only weapon, to do something; and have already written a short address to be published, if you and our other friends approve of it, a little before the election, or at the time when you may think it best. Having done this I am something more at ease. I wish I could prevail with you to come here and stay. You can't *live* at Vandalia. Edwardsville, I fancy, is not very healthy. I won't *insure* you here; but I have a right to give you good hopes of escaping the summer complaints at our place. I have room plenty, in house and heart, to accommodate you in a plain way. Your political influence would, I think, be promoted by your spending a good part of the year on this side of the State; and to extend and strengthen that influence is, at this time, your imperious duty. You shall have the library to yourself to retire to when you please, and be as independent and welcome as a sincere friend can make you. It gives me great pleasure to find that Mr. Pell was what I expected of him in his polit-

ical commencement. His being thrown so advantageously into the same berth with yourself will tend to confirm his character. It is a consolation to me that one so near me has so much good principle and discretion. I shall expect a few lines from you soon and often (I don't ask you for long elaborate epistles) until I may hope for the pleasure of receiving you here. My plan on that head is certainly a good one. I entreat you to fall in with it without hesitation Excuse this scrawl from your sincere friend,

M. Birkbeck.

Sunday Morning. Mr. Pell informs me that you will be engaged this summer on the western side of the State, reviewing militia, and that I must not hope to see much of you. Perhaps you may have time and inclination to pay us a visit before you take the field. If a correspondence could be set on foot among the friends of freedom scattered over the State, they might strengthen and inform each other, and the influence of good feeling might be increased. I would gladly bear a part in it. Is land higher in Missouri than in this State, or more saleable? or in Kentucky, *cæteris paribus*, than in Ohio? The Missourians and Kentuckians have felt the adversity of the times equally with ourselves, it may be presumed—from their having played the same game of Legislation about Currency and Stay laws. The supposed advance in the price of land from the admission of Slavery, appears to be the grand temptation with our people. If this opinion be ill founded, as I believe it is, I wish the case could be clearly and simply stated. I *know* that very many respectable farmers in England are looking to this State as a refuge when they can clear out of their farms, but not one in a hundred would settle in a

Slave State; and a great part of those from that country who are now here would fly from it.

It is essential to impress on the minds of our citizens, two things, in regard to the present crisis. One is the infamy of the proceedings of the Slave faction at Vandalia; this I have attempted to point out, with its consequences, if sanctioned by the people, in the paper I have alluded to above, and which I wish to submit to your inspection; that if you approve of it you may judge of the best time and manner of giving it circulation among the electors. The other is the *impolicy* of Slavery—for this purpose, tho' the fact is demonstrable from the nature of things, I want particular statements founded on experience, derived from authentic sources. If you give your attention to the subject you may direct my inquiries into a proper channel. Is there any enlightened individual in the State of Ohio, or any where else, with whom I could open a correspondence for this purpose? Any publications by citizens of the United States? Has not Mr. Jefferson written on Slavery?

To GOVERNOR COLES,
Edwardsville,
Illinois.

Governor Coles to Morris Birkbeck.

VANDALIA, April 12th, 1823.

Dear Sir:—I rec'd a few days since, via Edwardsville, your kind and acceptable letter of the 1st ulto. I am much gratified to find you have abandoned all idea of a tour for the present; and that your feelings are warmly enlisted in the great question on which hangs our destiny. Feeling as you do on this subject, with a mind so discriminating and so well stored with information, and gifted with a peculiarly happy talent of expressing your

ideas in a plain and forcible style, I know of no man in the State who could be of more service than yourself in enlightening the people and giving them correct views of the moral and political character of the question, as well as of its immediate bearing upon their present interests and future welfare. As the opposite party will keep up an incessant effort through the press to make converts to the convention, our side of the question will have to follow their example, not only for the purpose of correcting their misrepresentations and refuting their arguments, but from time to time to present correct views of the real objects, and injurious effects resulting from a Convention. The great interest the people take, the extraordinary anxiety they feel, either for or against the Convention, forces its consideration on the community, and already we find in every assemblage, however small, it is a subject of discussion, and that the people are daily making up their minds and committing themselves by taking sides. Whilst this is going on we ought not to lay on our arms, and let the enemy undermine the feelings and judgment of the people, and thus sap the foundations of our strength. Considerable effort has been made by both parties to procure the support of the different printing presses in the State. The Slave party will have the support of the press of this place, at Shawneetown, and one of the two presses established at Edwardsville; the other espouses the cause of freedom. The editors here, however, though avowedly and decidedly in favor of a Convention, declare their willingness to admit pieces into their papers both for and against it. It is not known positively what side the press at Kaskaskia will take; but I am disposed to think it will be on our side. The friends of freedom being thus situated, is it not desirable, nay necessary, for the suc-

cess of their holy cause, to have a press established on the eastern side of the State. It appears to me that Albion, as well from its local situation, as from the means in and about it, both mental and pecuniary, would render it the most eligible place for such an establishment. I mentioned this subject last winter to Mr. Pell, to whom I refer you for the reasons and views which induced me to suggest the propriety of it. I have just written to Mr. R. Flower, to whom I have also taken the liberty to suggest it, and a still further liberty to ask it as a favor to me, and as a sacrifice calculated to promote the success of the great cause in which we, and I trust, a great majority of Edwards county, are also deeply interested, to bury, at least during the pendency of the question, all personal, national, local, and other unkind feelings, and unite heart and hand to promote the good cause.

I am extremely sorry not to have it in my power to answer satisfactorily your enquiries. Altho' the fact is notorious, lands are always higher in price in non-slave-holding-States than in slave-holding-States, yet I cannot refer to any authentic statistical or other publication, pointing out the fact in detail. I know the fact to be so from my own personal observation and enquiries, made while traveling through the different sections of the Union, and especially along the Atlantic seaboard, where the general face of the country brightens, and the cultivation and value of the soil increases, with the accession of free labor. This could at once be made satisfactorily to appear if we could lay our hands on the assessments of lands for taxation made in the several States. In my native State (Va.), if I mistake not, the assessment of lands of the different counties, made by the general board of assessors, go to establish the fact in general that the lands bear the highest price in the

counties where there were fewest slaves in proportion to the white population. It is true, in the year 1818 the Gov't sold lands higher in Missouri than it has ever done in this State; but this arose from peculiar circumstances, which circumstances I have no doubt would have made similar lands sell as high in this State. As a proof of it, lands are now no higher in that State than in this—and the "hard times," as they are emphatically called, have been as sensibly felt there as here. Fictitious banks, the political locusts which have devoured the fruits of the land, have been more encouraged, and of course the hard times have been much more detrimental to Kentucky and Ohio than to Missouri and this State. But in this Slavery has had no hand, but it has been the chief and only cause why Ohio, with a colder climate and much less fertile soil and many years the junior of Kentucky, has far outstripped her in population and in wealth. With respect to the relative value of land in Ohio and Kentucky, since the currency of those States has been so deranged, I have no particular information; but I feel very certain that the land still continues much higher generally in the former than in the latter State.

With respect to your inquiry as to the best source of information, founded on experience collected in this country of the effects of Slavery, I can give you but little information, as, in truth, but little has been written on the subject. I know of no one who has touched so feelingly and forcibly on the moral and political character of Slavery as Mr. Jefferson in his "Notes on Va." If you could lay your hands on the debates on the "Missouri question" in Congress, you would be able to collect many interesting facts. I shall probably have it in my power to send you one or two of the best of these

speeches. There is a newspaper printed monthly at Greenville, in Green county, Tennessee, by a Quaker of the name of Ben. Lundy, called the "Genius of Universal Emancipation," the columns of which are exclusively devoted to the subject of African Slavery as it exists in the U. S. I have seen but 2 or 3 numbers of this paper, in each of which there was something more or less valuable on this subject. I have determined to subscribe for it, and shall endeavor to prevail on the editor to furnish me with a regular file of his paper since its commencement, which I believe was about 2 or 3 years ago. If this paper has been well edited it *ought* to contain the substance of everything interesting on this subject. Soon after the adjournment of the Legislature, I was compelled by business to go to Edwardsville and Belleville, where happening to be during the sitting of the Court, I had it in my power to see many of the people, and was much gratified to find the counties of Madison and St. Clair as much opposed to the call of a Convention as I had imagined them to have been. The people in those counties received and treated me with great kindness, insisting upon my giving them an opportunity of evincing publicly their approbation of my public conduct, etc., etc., by inviting me to partake of a public dinner, at which many attended, proving by their conduct that they were not only the friends of *freedom* but of *order*.

I owe you a thousand apologies, my dear friend, for your very, very kind invitation to visit and spend some time with you. You know what pleasure it would afford me, and will therefore know if I should not visit you soon that it will not be my fault. I do not now know when it will be in my power to visit you, but I fear it

will not be very soon; as soon, however, as it is in my power you may expect to see me.

I beg you to let Mr. Pell see this letter, for whom it is intended in part. My respects to him and Lady, as well as to all the members of your family, including Mr. and Mrs. Hanks. You will pardon me for writing so long a letter, to which I have been prompted by the deep interest I feel in the great question, and the pleasure I find in holding converse with you.

Your friend,

EDWARD COLES.

To MORRIS BIRKBECK,
Wanborough, Edwards County,
Illinois.

Morris Birkbeck to Governor Coles.

WANBOROUGH, Dec. 6, 1823.

Dear Sir: * * * * * * *

I take the liberty by this mail to send you half a dozen; and if, on reading a copy, you should think it may be useful to any of the unconverted Conventionists, you may put it in their way. I am glad you think favorably of the course the question is taking. I believe the advocates of a Convention are not so numerous as they have been on this side of the State. The leaders do not seem to be so sanguine. This may, however, be a *ruse de guerre* preparatory to a grand push in the spring. I am rejoiced that you have escaped from sickness this summer. My family has enjoyed excellent health, and the neighborhood—as heretofore. We should be glad to see you amongst us; and a friendly visit from you would give *me* peculiar pleasure. I have not seen Mr. Pell since the morning, when I received your letter. I shall de-

liver your message to him, and I beg you to believe me your sincere friend, M. BIRKBECK.

To GOVERNOR COLES,
Vandalia.

Governor Coles to Morris Birkbeck.

VANDALIA, January 29, 1824.

My Dear Sir:—I had the pleasure to receive, in due course of mail, your letter of the 6th ulto., together with six of your pamphlets, which you were so good as to send me, for which I return you my thanks. I had previously seen republished in a newspaper your pamphlet, and had read it with great pleasure. I could not but wish every Conventionist in the State had it and was compelled to read it with attention. Our society at Edwardsville intends having another and large edition of it reprinted for the purpose of having it extensively circulated. I took the liberty to send one or two of your pamphlets to some distant and particular friends, who take a deep interest in the Slave question in this State. By the by, should not the review of your pamphlet, which appeared first in the Illinois Gazette, and since republished in all the Convention papers of the State, be noticed? It is very ingeniously written, but what more particularly requires correction is the fabrications and misrepresentations of facts. One or two of these were hastily noticed and sent to be inserted last week in the paper published here; but no paper has since issued from the press.

During the setting of the Courts, and the sale of the lands of non-residents for taxes, we had a considerable number of persons assembled here from almost every part of the State; and a pretty good opportunity was afforded of collecting the public sentiment in relation to the great question which is now convulsing the State.

The friends of a Convention pretended to be pleased; but it was very apparent they were not; and the more honest and liberal among them acknowledged that they thought their prospects bad. Our friends on the other hand were much pleased, and rendered much more sanguine of success from the information they received. The friends of Slavery, however, were caucusing nearly every night, and made many arrangements for their electioneering campaign. Among others, it is said, they have appointed five persons in each county, with a request that these five appoint three in each election precinct, for the purpose of diffusing their doctrines, embodying their forces, and acting with the greatest concert and effect. This is well calculated to bring their strength to bear in the best possible manner, and should, as far as possible, be counteracted. When bad men conspire, good men should be watchful.

The friends of a Convention appear to become more and more bitter and virulent in their enmity to me, and seem determined not only to injure my standing with the people, but to break down my pecuniary resources. A suit has been lately instituted at Edwardsville against me for the recovery of the sum of $200 for *each* negro emancipated by me and brought to this State. The suit has been brought under a law passed on the 30th of March, 1819, but which was not printed or promulgated until the October following. In the meantime, that is about the first week of May, my negroes emigrated to and settled in this State. What is truly farcical in this suit is, that a poor worthless fellow, who has no property, and of course pays no tax, has been selected to institute it, from the fear he has of being taxed to support the negroes I emancipated, when they, who are all young and healthy, are so prosperous as to possess comfortable

livings, and some of them pay as much as four dollars a year tax on their property. I should indeed, my friend, be unfortunate were I now compelled to pay $200 for each of my negroes, big and little, dead and living (for the suit goes to this) after the sacrifices I have made, and my efforts to befriend and enable them to live comfortably. For I not only emancipated all my negroes, which amounted to one-third of all the property my father bequeathed me, but I removed them out here at an expense of between five and six hundred dollars, and then gave each head of a family, and all others who had passed the age of 24, one hundred and sixty acres of land each, and exerted myself to prevail on them to be honest, industrious and correct in their conduct. This they have done in a remarkable degree, so much so, with all the prejudice against free negroes, there never has been the least ground for charge or censure against any one of them. And now, for the first time in my life, to be sued for what I thought was generous and praiseworthy conduct, creates strange feelings, which, however, cease to give me personal mortification, when I reflect on the character and motives of those who have instituted it.

Just about the time this suit was instituted, I had the misfortune to lose by fire two-thirds of all the buildings and enclosures on my farm, together with about 200 apple trees and as many peach trees—several of each kind large enough to bear fruit. And soon after, the "State House" having been consumed by fire, a project was set on foot to rebuild it by subscription. Not liking the plan and arrangements, I declined subscribing, and proposed others, which I thought would be more for the interest of the State, of the county, and of the town—and which by the way are now generally admitted would have been best. This however was immedi-

ately laid hold of by some of the factious Conventionists who being aware that the loss of the State House would operate to the injury of their favorite measure in *this county*, and being anxious to display great solicitude for the interest of the people here, and that, too, as much as possible at the expense of the anti-Conventionists, they busied themselves in misrepresenting to the multitude my reasons and motives for not subscribing my name to their paper, and with the aid of large potions of whiskey, contrived to get up a real *vandal* mob, who vented their spleen against me, in the most noisy and riotous manner, nearly all night, for my opposition to a convention and for my refusal, as they termed it, to rebuild the State House. All this and other instances of defamation and persecution, create in my bosom opposite feelings; one of pain, the other of pleasure. Pain to see my fellow man so ill-natured and vindictive merely because I am the friend of my species, and am opposed to one portion oppressing another—pleasure that I should be in a situation which enables me to render services to the just and good cause in which we are engaged; and so far from repining at these indignities and persecutions, I am thankful to Providence for placing me in the van of this eventful contest, and giving me a temper, zeal, and resolution which I trust will enable me to bear with proper fortitude the peltings which are inseparable from it. In conclusion, I pray you to do me the justice to believe, that no dread of personal consequences will ever abate my efforts to promote the good of the public, much less to abandon the great fundamental principles of civil and personal liberty—and to be assured of my sincere friendship.

EDWARD COLES.

MORRIS BIRKBECK, ESQ.,
Wanborough, Edwards County.

Mr. Birkbeck to Governor Coles.

WANBOROUGH, Feb. 19, 1824.

My Dear Sir:—I have just received your letter of January 29, and I assure you the receiving it has given me unfeigned pleasure, although its contents, as far as the unworthy conduct of the party is productive of vexation to you, I as sincerely lament. I am sorry that it should be at your expense; but as it tends to expose the badness of the cause and the iniquity of its supporters, the friends of liberty and virtue can hardly regret that they should have thus displayed their true character.

For myself, my private situation screens me in great measure from persecution, though I presume, not from the honor of their hatred. I am glad you approve my little pamphlet; if I could afford it I would spare the society at Edwardsville the expense of republishing, &c. I have the satisfaction of knowing that it has done some good, by changing the sentiments of several, who through want of reflection or knowledge, had been advocates of Slavery. And as there are many up and down in all parts of the State, who are in that situation, I trust its general circulation will be useful. I am continually plying the Slave party, through the Illinois Gazette, with popular discussions and sometimes with legal arguments, under the signature of Jonathan Freeman, and some others. You will see, if you read that paper, an ironical proposal of a plan for raising a fund to colonize the negroes as an appendage to limited Slavery, signed J., which I think may show the absurdity of that plan of the Conventionists more effectually than serious argument. The Edwardsville Spectator published about a dozen of those short letters, and I suppose you will see a few more of them shortly. As they present the question

in various lights, pointing out the wickedness and folly of the slave scheme, dissected as it were into distinct portions, I imagine they make an impression on some readers more effectually than a continued course of argument. I submit, with great deference, a thought that some of these would be useful if re-published by way of appendix to the *Appeal*. Perhaps you will revert to them, and notice a few more which you will soon see; then do as you see good.

As *publication* is essential to the binding power of a law, in fact to its existence *as law*, you will of course defeat your persecutors, and put them to shame, on the principle of *ex post facto*. You could not infringe in May a law promulgated in October following.

The fire at Vandalia is rather against the Conventionists in that quarter. The idea of re-building the State House by subscription, you, as Governor, could hardly countenance. What authority have individuals to act in this case, even at their own expense? And what claim have they on your private purse? I am only sorry for your personal vexation under these attacks. They discover the weakness and folly of the party, and I am in hopes they are losing ground. They have great zeal and activity and no delicacy about the means; there is considerable zeal, too, and activity on our side; and setting the good principles of our cause against their total want of principle, I trust we are a match for them, provided we do not relax in our efforts. The attack on my pamphlet by Americanus, (who is Mr. Webb, of Bonpas,) seems to be ridiculed and despised, even by their own side. I have sent to the Illinois Gazette a short reply to the personalities; further I thought needless, and have just written another to the same effect, which I shall send to the Vandalia paper. Not being pre-

sumed to know the author, some severity of retort seems allowable.

You have a circle at Vandalia chiefly, I fear, of the wrong sort in regard to the vital question, which circumstance must detract from your social enjoyment, where at best it could ill be spared. The cause on which you are engaged so heartily is so thoroughly good that it will bear you up through many sacrifices and privations. Your sentiments on the subject rejoice and encourage me, and in return (pedantry as it may seem) I shall give you a sentiment from Horace for *your* encouragement.*

> Justum et tenacem propositi virum,
> Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
> Non vultus instantis tyranni,
> Mente quatit solida.

I remain, with great esteem, yours,

M. Birkbeck.

Of the many others who took an active part against the Convention, there were David Blackwell, Judge Samuel D. Lockwood, Hooper Warren, Jonathan H. Pugh, George Forquer, Daniel P. Cook, Thomas Lippencott, George Churchill, Thomas Mather and Henry Eddy.

Mr. Birkbeck wrote a series of letters during the Convention canvass, over the *nom de plume* of

*The last paragraph of Mr. Birkbeck's letter cannot but excite admiration. The quotation from Horace applied with great force to the case of Governor Coles:

"Neither the ardor of citizens ordering base things, nor the face of the threatening tyrant shakes a man just and tenacious of principle from his firm intentions."

"Jonathan Freeman," which were widely published and almost universally read. They were written in a plain but captivating. style, full of facts and arguments, and embellished by homely but apt illustrations. They proved a source of great annoyance to the Convention party, and as he was known to be the author, he was most bitterly assailed. He was denounced as a "foreign emissary," and an "exile," sneered at as a "Quaker," and charged with being an "Infidel." But it was all to no purpose. The more he was attacked, the more were his letters read. Speaking of these letters in his manuscript history of Edwards county, Mr. George Flower well says:

"Whatever may be thought of Mr. Birkbeck, by those who would square every man's opinion by their own, the inhabitants of the State Illinois, if for nothing else, should hold his memory in respect and gratitude for the decided part he took against the introduction of Slavery in his letters of 'JONATHAN FREEMAN.'"

CHAPTER XV.

THE ELECTION TAKES PLACE; VOTE OF COUNTIES FOR AND AGAINST THE CONVENTION RESOLUTION; COPY OF A CONVENTION BALLOT; CONVENTION SCHEME DEFEATED BY MORE THAN EIGHTEEN HUNDRED MAJORITY; CONVENTION MEN DEFEATED, BUT THEY RALLY UNDER THE BANNER OF JACKSON; GET CONTROL OF THE STATE; PRO-SLAVERY MEN ELECTED UNITED STATES SENATORS; BIRKBECK APPOINTED SECRETARY OF STATE *vice* BLACKWELL; BIRKBECK REJECTED BY THE SENATE; DEATH OF BIRKBECK.

THE day had now arrived when the people of Illinois, in their sovereign capacity, were to pass on a question involving interests and consequences of the most supreme importance to themselves and their posterity. Should a convention be called, there was no question that the then existing constitution prohibiting Slavery would be changed, and a constitution authorizing Slavery would be adopted. Whatever attempts had been made in the earlier part of the campaign to make it appear that, should a new constitution be made, it did not follow it would authorize Slavery, yet, as the contest progressed, the Convention men were driven to the avowal that it was a Slave Constitution they intended to adopt. So, in the end, the naked question was presented, "Shall Illinois be a Free or Slave State?"

The discussions on the stump, through the press, in the churches, at the cross-roads and at the fire-side, had prepared the people to decide the question. It was on the first Monday of August, 1824, that the election was to take place. The hand-to-hand struggle had continued eighteen months, and super-human exertions had been made on both sides. Both parties welcomed the arrival of the moment that was finally to end a struggle that had evoked so much feeling and passion, involved so much labor and absorbed such intense interest. The following is the vote of counties for and against the Convention Resolution:

Counties.	For.	Ag'nst.	Counties.	For.	Ag'nst.
Alexander,	75	51	Lawrence,	158	261
Bond,	63	240	Madison,	351	563
Clark,	31	116	Marion,	45	52
Crawford,	134	262	Montgomery	74	90
Edgar,	3	234	Monroe,	141	196
Edwards,	189	391	Morgan,	42	455
Fayette,	125	121	Pike,	23	261
Franklin,	170	113	Pope,	273	124
Fulton,	5	60	Randolph,	357	284
Gallatin,	596	133	Sangamon,	153	722
Greene,	135	405	St. Clair,	427	543
Hamilton,	173	85	Union,	213	240
Jackson,	180	93	Washington,	112	173
Jefferson,	99	43	Wayne,	189	111
Johnson,	74	74	White,	355	326
Vote against Convention Resolution,					6,822
Vote for Convention Resolution,					4,950
Being a majority of					1,872
Out of a vote of					11,772

Judge Gillespie has sent me a ticket which he

says "came from the papers of a man named Samuel McKitrick, now deceased, and which was used on election day on the Convention question. It shows how artfully the tickets were gotten up to give the Conventionists the benefit of accidents; the figures on the back of the ticket—'1824'—are in the hand-writing of Mr. McK. When you are done with the ticket, please hand it to the Historical Society, to be kept as a *memento*." The following is the ticket:

PEOPLE'S BALLOT.

For new Constitution.
For article prohibiting banks.
For exclusion of negroes and mulattoes.
No right of suffrage or office to negroes or mulattoes.
For laws excluding negroes and mulattoes from coming into and voting in this State.
For Congressional apportionment.

The Convention scheme was overwhelmingly defeated, and it would naturally be supposed that the men who had thrust it upon the people would have been driven from public life. Not so, however. It was the year of the Presidential election. While the anti-Convention party was united, harmonious and vehement in its opposition to the call for a Convention, there were serious divisions in it as to Presidential preferences. General Jackson

had been brought out as a candidate, and his name evoked great enthusiasm. The Convention men generally rallied under his banner, while the anti-Convention party divided its vote between Adams, Crawford and Clay.* Fighting under the Jackson flag, the Convention men achieved great advantages in the legislative elections, particularly in view of the division of their opponents. The Convention question out of the way, the Jackson party having been formed, became irresistible. The Convention men flocked to the standard of "Old Hickory," and though so badly beaten on the Convention Resolution before the people, yet as *Jackson* men they soon found themselves in the majority in the State, controlling everything, while the anti-Con-

* The popular vote was as follows: Jackson one thousand nine hundred and one; Adams one thousand five hundred and forty-two: Crawford two hundred and nineteen; Clay one thousand and forty-seven. There was no choice of President by the people at this election, and the House of Representatives elected John Quincy Adams. Hon. Daniel P. Cook, the only Representative in Congress from Illinois, cast the vote of the State for Mr. Adams. The vote of Mr. Cook was severely denounced by the Jackson men, but it was entirely justifiable. While Jackson had a majority of three hundred and fifty votes over Adams, the highest opposition candidate, yet he was in a minority of six hundred and eighty-seven votes in the State. Cook was elected to the nineteenth Congress in August, 1824, but he was beaten for the twentieth Congress in 1826 by Joseph Duncan, the Jackson candidate. In 1828 Jackson and Adams were the opposing candidates for President, and out of eight thousand three hundred and forty-four votes in Illinois, Jackson received six thousand seven hundred and sixty-three.

vention men, who had won so glorious a triumph for liberty and preserved to the people the blessings of our free constitution, politically went to the wall. The Legislature of 1824–5, instead of electing Governor Coles or some other prominent anti-Convention man Senator, to succeed Ninian Edwards, elected Elias Kent Kane, a strong pro-Slavery and Convention man, for the long term, and John McLean, equally Convention and pro-Slavery, for the short term. Four judges of the Supreme Court were elected by the same Legislature: William Wilson, Chief Justice, Samuel D. Lockwood, Theophilus W. Smith, and Thomas C. Browne, Justices. The two latter had been Convention men, and Smith one of the most violent and offensive, though one of the ablest in the State. There is nothing stranger than this in our political history.

David Blackwell, having been elected a member of the House of Representatives from St. Clair county, resigned his office as Secretary of State in Oct., 1824. In the following letter Governor Coles offered the position to Mr. Birkbeck.

Governor Coles to Mr. Birkbeck.

EDWARDSVILLE, Sep. 22, 1824.

Dear Sir:—Mr. Blackwell, having been elected a member of the Legislature, has notified me that he shall resign the office of Secretary of State on the 2nd or 3d

of next month. The object of this letter is to offer that situation to you. It is desirable that I should hear from you on this subject as soon as possible, and if you should think proper to accept, I wish you to meet me at Vandalia during the first week of October. It has occurred to me that if the office of Secretary of State should not be agreeable to you to hold permanently, it would be so at least during the next winter. Be this, however, as it may, it affords me pleasure to have it in my power to give you so strong a proof of the high estimation in which I hold your character, and to gratify the deep rooted attachment of your friend,

EDWARD COLES.

MORRIS BIRKBECK, ESQ.,
Wanborough.

I had hoped after the great and decided majority which was given at the late election against a Convention, my political enemies would have ceased to persecute me. But in this I was mistaken. It would seem I must be sacrificed. Nothing short of my entire ruin will satisfy my enemies, and they seem determined to effect it without regard to the means. Yesterday the suit which has been instituted against me for freeing my negroes was called up for trial. Judge Reynolds not only decided several points of law against me, in opposition to the opinion of several of the best lawyers in the State, but he and Mr. Turney rejected *all* my testimony as illegal, and would not permit a solitary word to be uttered by a witness of mine. Under such circumstances the jury found a verdict of $2,000 against me, which, with the cost, will be a difficult sum for me to raise, these hard times. I shall ask for a new trial. If this application should share the fate of all the others I have made, it is

to be hoped he will not assume the power to prevent my taking an appeal to the Supreme Court.

In haste, your friend,

ED. COLES.

In the following letter Mr. Birkbeck accepted the office tendered:

Mr. Birkbeck to Governor Coles.

VANDALIA, Oct. 9, 1824.

Dear Sir:—I received your favor of Sept. 22, offering me the situation of Secretary of State, and expressing your wish, in case of my accepting the office, that I would meet you at this place during the first week of this month. Relying on your judgment rather than my own in regard to my qualifications, and feeling great pleasure in the prospect of its affording me the occasion of more frequent friendly intercourse with you, I concluded to accept your proposal, and accordingly arrived here last night. I am truly sorry to learn from Col. Field that you are detained at Edwardsville by indisposition. Waiting for your instructions, I remain, Dear Sir, Yours most truly,

M. BIRKBECK.

GOV. COLES.

Though the call for a Convention had been largely defeated, yet the pro-Slavery men at the same election elected a majority of the Senate, which had to pass on the Governor's nomination for Secretary of State. They were but too well pleased to be enabled to visit their wrath on Mr.

Birkbeck, who had wielded so potent an influence in securing the rejection of their Convention project. His nomination was therefore rejected, and he only held the office for the period of three months, from Oct. 15, 1824, to Jan. 15, 1825. The rejection of Birkbeck by the Senate was utterly unjustifiable, for a better appointment could not have been made. The office at the time he went into it was in a state of confusion and disorder, but during his brief occupancy he reduced it to perfect order and arrangement. Sometime afterwards, speaking of Mr. Birkbeck, Governor Duncan said to a gentleman: "I came to Vandalia with every prejudice against Mr. Birkbeck as Secretary of State, but when I looked into the office and saw the order and management, especially when contrasted with the previous confusion, my opinion was completely changed." This was the only office that Mr. Birkbeck ever held in the State. Though rejected by a partisan and pro-Slavery Senate, and from motives unworthy of such a body, Illinois was honored by his holding the position even for so short a time. But it was not permitted to Mr. Birkbeck to live to see the development of that State which he had labored so effectually to keep free. On the 4th of June, 1825, on his return to Wanborough

from a visit to New Harmony, Indiana, he was drowned while crossing Fox river. His body, taken two days afterwards to New Harmony, was buried with every mark of respect and affection. Thus perished at the age of sixty-two years, Morris Birkbeck, one of the ablest and most cultivated men of his time in Illinois, whose influence wielded in the cause of freedom and humanity should always be gratefully remembered. None of his descendants remained in the State after his death. Two of his sons went to Mexico, some members of his family returned to England, and subsequently removed to Australia.

CHAPTER XVI.

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN GOVERNOR COLES AND ROBERTS VAUX; IMPORTANT AND INTERESTING LETTER OF THE GOVERNOR ON THE SITUATION; HIS ACCOUNT OF THE MALICIOUS LAW SUIT INSTITUTED AGAINST HIM FOR FREEING HIS SLAVES; HIS NOBLE WORDS IN THE DEED OF EMANCIPATION; THE PREJUDICE OF THE JUDGE; VERDICT AGAINST HIM FOR TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS; CASE APPEALED TO THE SUPREME COURT, AND JUDGMENT REVERSED; HIS UNPLEASANT AND EMBARRASSING POSITION; MOBBED BY A RABBLE AT VANDALIA; THE SPIRIT WHICH SUSTAINED HIM AND THE FAITH WHICH UPHELD HIM; BEAUTIFUL TRIBUTE OF MR. VAUX TO GOVERNOR COLES.

THE following letter of Governor Coles to Mr. Vaux, has a great historic interest. It illustrates the feeling in the State at the time it was written, and shows the persecution which the Governor was subjected to on account of the decided stand he took on the Slavery question. The lawsuit which he gives so full and interesting an account of, has gone into the judicial annals of the State. The manner in which the prosecution was abetted by the judges, and the political character that was given to it, will forever stain the history of our judiciary. Governor Coles had freed his slaves before entering the State, but after his arrival at Edwardsville, for the better protection of the freedmen, and on the advice of the Hon. Daniel P.

Cook, one of the most eminent lawyers of the State in his time, he gave separate papers of manumission to all his former slaves. At this time neither Governor Coles nor Mr. Cook knew anything about a law of the State that had been previously passed, but which was not promulgated till several months afterwards. This law prohibited any person from bringing into the State any negroes for the purpose of emancipation, unless he should give bonds in the penalty of one thousand dollars that the negro would not become a county charge, and that if the emancipator neglected to give this bond he should forfeit and pay the sum of two hundred dollars for every negro emancipated. Governor Coles had executed papers of manumission to persons, who had been his slaves, after they had been brought into the State, in technical violation of the statute in such case made and provided, and the pro-Slavery men were quick to avail themselves of an opportunity to harass and punish him. A suit was instituted, "The County of Madison *versus* Edward Coles," and the writ was made returnable at the March term of the Circuit Court at Edwardsville, 1824. John Reynolds was the presiding Judge. The defendant plead the Statute of Limitations, and put in several special pleas to

plaintiff's declaration. A demurrer was filed by plaintiff to the special pleas. The Court took time to consider, and the case went over to the September term. At this term of the Court John Reynolds again presided. A demurrer to the plea of the Statute of Limitations having been sustained, and the demurrer to the special pleas having been upheld, the defendant pleaded *nil debit.* Issue was joined, and the case was submitted to the jury, who returned a verdict against defendant for two thousand dollars. From a Bill of Exceptions taken during the trial and spread upon the records of the Court, it appears that the defendant, Coles, offered to give in evidence and prove to the jury that three of the negroes mentioned in the declaration of the plaintiff had departed this life before the commencement of the suit; but the astute Judge would not permit the testimony to be given, thus practically deciding that it was necessary to give a bond to hold the county harmless from the support of *dead men.* The defendant then offered to prove by Joseph Conway, the clerk of the County Commissioner's Court, that the defendant had never been notified or required to give bond, but the Court would not permit such evidence to be given. The defendant further offered to prove

by Daniel P. Cook, the attorney under whose advice he acted, the conversation he had with him before the date of certificate of manumission, and that he, Cook, advised the giving of such certificate in order to protect the negroes, and to "enable them to live themselves;" and also to prove by said Cook all the circumstances and conversation between said witness and defendant, which induced and led to the execution of said certificate, all of which evidence was rejected—the record to state that the plaintiff gave in evidence the following certificate:

"Whereas, my father, the late John Coles, of Albemarle, in the State of Virginia, did in his last will and testament give and bequeath to me certain negro slaves, among others Robert Crawford and his sister, Polly Crawford, the said Robert Crawford being a mulatto man, about five feet seven inches high, and now about twenty-seven years of age; and the said Polly being a mulatto woman about five feet one inch high, and now about sixteen or seventeen years of age. *And whereas, I do not believe that man can have a right of property in his fellow man, but on the contrary, that all mankind are endowed by nature with equal rights*, I do, therefore, by these presents restore to the said Robert and his sister Polly, *that inalienable liberty*

of which they have been deprived. And I do hereby renounce for myself and my heirs forever all claim of every description whatever to them and their services, and I do hereby emancipate and make free the said Robert Crawford and his sister, Polly Crawford. In testimony whereof, the said Coles set his hand and seal, on the 19th day of July, 1819."

This act of emancipation executed by Governor Coles and spread upon the records of the Court, stands out to his immortal honor, and makes more conspicuous the infamy of his persecutors.

The motion for a new trial, which had been made in the case at the September term, 1824, was not decided at that term, and the case went over to the March term, 1825. At this term of the court Judge Samuel McRoberts presided. The motion for a new trial in the case which he found undecided, was promptly overruled. Between the term of the court in September, 1824, and the March term, 1825, the Legislature (in January, 1825), passed an act releasing all penalties incurred under the act of 1819 (including those sued for), upon which Coles was prosecuted. The law required as conditions precedent to the release of the penalties, the execution of a bond that the negroes

should not become a charge upon any county in the State, and that all the costs of the suit and damages incurred should be paid. To enable the defendant to take advantage of this act at the June term, it was moved at the same term to set aside the verdict and judgment to enable him to plead *puis darrien continuance.* McRoberts proved equal to this last phase of the case; he overruled the motion for a new trial and rejected the plea, holding that the Legislature could not make a law to bar the recovery of the penalty in this case. The judge, however, was not able to prevent the defendant from taking an appeal to the Supreme Court of the State. This appeal was taken and heard at the June term of the court at Vandalia, 1826. The judgment of the Circuit Court was reversed and the cause remanded, with directions to receive the defendant's plea. Chief Justice Wilson gave an able and elaborate opinion. *Coles, plaintiff in error, versus the County of Madison, defendant in error; Breese's Reports, page* 115. The case was argued before the Supreme Court by Henry Starr for Coles, and Turney and Reynolds for the county of Madison. Henry Starr was at this time residing at Edwardsville, and one of the best lawyers in the State. He was a strong personal and

political friend of Governor Coles, and took a deep interest in this case. After being several years at Edwardsville, he returned to Cincinnati, where he attained great eminence in his profession. He died only a few years since.

Governor Coles to Roberts Vaux.

VANDALIA, Jan'y 21, 1824.

My Friend:—While at Edwardsville a few days since, I received a letter from D. B. Smith, notifying me that he had forwarded to the care of I. I. Smith & Co., of St. Louis, certain pamphlets; previous to which, however, I had been informed by one of that company that he expected them, and had requested him to notify me so soon as they should be received, and to forward them to me to this place by the first safe opportunity. I also had the pleasure to receive at Edwardsville the pamphlet you were so good as to enclose me by mail. The information contained in this pamphlet in relation to the foreign slave trade, is highly interesting. I must, however, be allowed to express my regret that it does not bear more directly on the question, which is now agitating us here, by showing the resemblance between the *foreign* and *domestic* slave trade, and the inevitable effect of the extension of Slavery into new regions, to continue and increase this odious traffic. To add to the circulation of this, as well as the pamphlet I had previously the pleasure to receive from you, I shall, if possible, prevail on some of the editors to publish them in their newspapers. But unfortunately for our cause, of the five newspapers printed in this State, four are the avowed advocates of Slavery (in other words for

a Convention) and but one of Freedom, and that one not friendly to me and other opponents of the Convention. This division among us arises from factions, personal and local feelings, and from the circumstance that we have many avowed friends of freedom, who are themselves the masters of slaves; and who, while they unite with us in opposing the means of the further introduction of Slavery, are at the same time violently opposed to our efforts to abolish the remnant of Slavery which is still allowed to stain our soil. There is also another class among us who profess to be opposed to Slavery, and who rail much against it, but yet who are friendly to it, as is fully evinced by their advocating every measure calculated to introduce and tolerate it here. The character and feelings of these several classes of our citizens were strongly exemplified last winter, when, on entering into office, I called the attention of the Legislature to the existence of Slavery among us, and urged its abolition. As it may be the means of throwing some light on the slave question in this State, I will send you, accompanying this letter, a printed copy of my speech, and a report made by a committee of the Legislature on a part of it.

My remarks and recommendation on the subject of Slavery produced a great excitement among those who held slaves, or were desirous of holding them, particularly among those advocates of a Convention who were professedly the opponents of Slavery, but secretly its friends, and who hoped under the fair mask of freedom, to deceive the people, and to smuggle in the monster Slavery. Bringing forward the measure of abolition at the same time they brought forward the Convention question, placed these professed friends to the rights of man in an awkard situation, for it was apparent if they voted agreeable to their declarations, they, together with the real

and genuine friends of freedom, would constitute a majority of the Legislature, and of course pass the abolition Bill. This state of things had the effect of unmasking their true opinions and views, and of clearly exhibiting to the public the real object for which a convention was to be called—that of making this a Slave-holding State. For having been instrumental in effecting this, and also for having acted up to my principles in restoring liberty to certain slaves given to me by my father, it would seem I am never to be forgiven, but to be subject to an unrelenting and cruel persecution, which aims to destroy not only my political influence, but my personal character and property. After having resorted to various means to injure my standing with the people, an effort is now made to cripple my pecuniary resources, and thus to disable me from promoting the cause of freedom, and of punishing me for what I have done in this way. A suit has been recently instituted against me to recover the penal sum of $200 for *each* negro emancipated and brought by me to this State. This suit has been brought under a law passed about the first of April 1819, which prohibited any person from bringing into this State any negro for the purpose of emancipation, unless he would give bond under a penalty of $1,000 that the negro should not become a county charge, and that if the emancipator neglected to give this bond he should forfeit and pay the sum of $200 for each negro emancipated. My negroes emigrated to and settled in this State about *one month after* the passage of this act, but more than *five months before* it was printed or promulgated. To the peculiar hardship of my case, from the impossibility of knowing of the existence of the law, until after I had violated its provisions and incurred its penalty, is to be added the fact of my not

being content with freeing the negroes in Virginia, and thus relinquishing more than one-third of the property given me by my father, but from a desire to promote their interest, removed them to this State, at an expense of between five and six hundred dollars, and then gave them as a remuneration for their past services, and a stimulous to future exertion, one hundred and sixty acres of land to each who had passed the age of 24. They all behaved uniformly well, and are honest, industrious and prosperous. And what is truly farcical in this suit is that it has been instituted at the instance of a worthless fellow, the tool of a faction, who is destitute of property, and pays no tax, and of course has no direct interest whether the negroes become a county charge or not, when they are all young and healthy, and so prosperous that one of the families pay as much as *four* dollars as a tax to the county. Never having been sued before, I feel the more mortified at being prosecuted for violating the laws of a State over which the people have called me to preside, but this mortification is considerably abated when I reflect on the nature of my offense, and the character of the prosecutors.

About the time of instituting this suit I had the misfortune to lose by fire about two-thirds of all the buildings and enclosures on my farm. Soon after which the "State House" was also consumed by fire. The inhabitants of this place, feeling that they had an interest in its being immediately rebuilt, proposed to do so by contribution. After my recent loss by fire, and with this suit hanging over me, I did not feel myself in a situation to be very liberal; and not liking some of the arrangements, proposed an alteration of them, and in the meantime declined subscribing. This was immediately seized hold of by the friends of a Convention, who formed a mob,

and paraded the streets nearly the whole night, giving vent to their spleen against me for my opposition to a Convention, and refusal, as they termed it, to rebuild the State House. In this way every little circumstance is laid hold of to render me unpopular; but in this case their passions led them too far, as their conduct has produced on the community a reaction which has been of service to me, and the cause I advocate. Discovering this, they now deny having had anything to do with the mob.

Having had the good fortune, through every period of my life, to live in great harmony with my fellow man, the enmity and persecution I have lately had to encounter, have created a new state of feeling, and caused me to look into my own conduct to see whether it has been correct. In this review I have been gratified to find I have not given just cause of offense to any one; but I have been grieved to perceive with what virulence I have been pelted, when the only complaint against me is, that I am a friend to the equal rights of man, and am considered a barrier to my opponents acquiring the power of oppressing their fellow men. Under this view of my situation, I am gratified that Providence has placed me in the van of this great contest; and I am truly thankful that my system is so organized as to leave no room for doubt, fear or hesitation. My opinions have long since been maturely formed, and my course deliberately taken, and is not now to be changed by detraction, prosecutions, or threats of "*Convention or death.*"

I beg you excuse my troubling you with the perusal of so long a letter, and that you will pardon me for having said so much of myself, in consideration of its connection with the great question now agitating this State,

by interesting yourself in which you have displayed so signal and praiseworthy an instance of your benevolence —for which I pray you to accept the grateful thanks of your friend,

EDWARD COLES.

To ROBERTS VAUX,
Philadelphia.

This letter of Governor Coles, written in the confidence of private friendship, now made public after a period of nearly sixty years, will show to the people of Illinois at the present day the extent of his persecution for "righteousness sake." Harassed by malicious lawsuits, a victim of the prejudices of unjust judges, mobbed by a rabble, maligned and misrepresented in every possible way, his position was one of the most unpleasant and embarrassing in which a public man can find himself. But armed with the panoply of truth and justice, and battling in a great and holy cause, he was never dismayed or discouraged. The spirit which sustained him, and the faith which upheld him, are manifested in the following extract from the above letter to Mr. Vaux:

"Having had the good fortune through every period of my life, to live in great harmony with my fellow men, the enmity and persecution I have lately had to encounter, have created a new state of feelings and caused me to look into my own conduct, to see whether it has

been correct. In this review I have been gratified to find I have not given just cause of offense to any one; but I have been grieved to perceive with what violence I have been pelted, when the only complaint against me is that I am a friend to the equal rights of man, and am considered a barrier to my opponents acquiring the power of oppressing their fellow-men. Under this view of my situation, I am gratified that Providence has placed me in the van of this great contest, and I am truly thankful that my system is so organized as to leave no room for doubt, fear or hesitation. My opinions have long since been maturely formed, and my course deliberately taken, and is not now to be changed by detraction, persecution, or threats of "*Convention or death.*"

This letter of January 21, 1824, was answered by Mr. Vaux July 14, 1824, by a letter containing the following most beautiful and just tribute to Governor Coles:

"The part which thee has been called to act, privately as well as publicly and officially, in regard to the rights of mankind, and for the upholding of the principles of justice and mercy toward a degraded and oppressed portion of our fellow beings, ought to be regarded as a manifestation of Providential power, concerning which we must always believe the same Divine interposition will be extended in every exigency. I am altogether satisfied that it is reserved for thee to witness the triumph of truth and beneficence in the struggle to which thee has been exposed; and, what is of infinitely greater value, as it respects thyself, to reap a plentiful harvest

in the most precious of all rewards, the approbation of Heaven!

I feel a deep interest in thy character, and a lively gratitude for thy service, and it will always be among the purest consolations of my mind to be assured of thy welfare and happiness."

CHAPTER XVII.

LETTER OF ROBERTS VAUX TO GOVERNOR COLES; LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR HUBBARD ATTEMPTS TO USURP THE OFFICE OF GOVERNOR; DEFEATED BY THE SUPREME COURT, AND FAILS IN THE LEGISLATURE; LETTER OF GOVERNOR COLES TO ROBERTS VAUX; ENFORCES HIS VIEWS ON SLAVERY IN A LETTER TO JOHN RUTHERFORD; VIEWS ON THE PARDONING POWER IN A LETTER TO DANIEL HAY; AN EXTRA SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE CALLED; GOVERNOR COLES' MESSAGE; HIS RECOMMENDATIONS; VISIT OF LAFAYETTE TO ILLINOIS; LETTER OF LAFAYETTE TO GOVERNOR COLES; GOVERNOR COLES SENDS HIS AID, COL. HAMILTON, TO MEET HIM; NOTICE OF COL. HAMILTON; RECEPTION OF GEN. LAFAYETTE AT KASKASKIA.

Roberts Vaux to Governor Coles.

PHILADELPHIA, 6 Mo. 14, 1824.

Esteemed Friend:—My delay in the acknowledgement of the receipt of thy truly interesting letter of Jan'y 21, last, will not, I trust, be attributed to any want of respect and kindness, but to the real causes, which were, first, an unusual press of business relative to several public institutions, which at the season of the receipt of that communication demanded my attention; and secondly, to the expectation subsequently entertained here, that thy presence might be expected at Washington as successor in the Senate of the United States to N. Edwards, appointed on a foreign mission. The likelihood that the latter event might bring us to a *personal* acquaintance in this city, when the session of Congress should terminate, was contemplated with pleasure, since a direct interchange of opinion would be preferred to epistolary correspondence. Time, however,

has served to show that this prospect, with many others upon which we dwell with satisfaction, failed of realization, and I therefore avail myself of the only means which are left to renew the assurance of my remembrance, of my undissembled regard, and of my sincere sympathy. The part which thee has been called to act privately, as well as publicly, and officially, in regard to the rights of mankind, and for the upholding of the principles of justice, and mercy toward a degraded and oppressed portion of our fellow beings, ought to be regarded as a manifestation of Providential power, concerning which we must always believe the same Divine interposition will be extended in every exigency. I am altogether satisfied that it is reserved for thee to witness the triumph of truth and beneficence in the struggle to which thee has been exposed; and, what is of infinitely greater value, as it respects thyself, to reap a plenteous harvest in the most precious of all rewards, the approbation of Heaven!

I feel a deep interest in thy character, and a lively gratitude for thy services, and it will always be among the purest consolations of my mind to be assured of thy welfare and happiness; with these impressions I salute thee, and remain faithfully,

Thy Friend,

ROBERTS VAUX.

To EDWARD COLES,
Governor of Illinois.

P. S.—I yesterday passed half an hour with our friend, N. Biddle; he is well, but very much occupied with official duties at the bank.

Roberts Vaux to Governor Coles.

BIRWOOD LODGE, 9 Mo. 1, 1824.

Dear Friend: The last intelligence from Philadelphia is, that the great question which has so long agitated your State, and which had a bearing so important upon the common interests of humanity and justice, has been determined. Happy for your commonwealth! Creditable for our country! Slavery will not be permitted to overrun Illinois! The result of the conflict is truly joyous; you have said to the moral plague, "*Thus far, but no farther, shalt thou come.*"

My warmest congratulations are tendered on this great event, though I know how inferior all exterior circumstances must be in comparison with the heart-solacing reward which is reaped by thy devotedness in this noble cause.

Since I have been at my summer residence, I have received several numbers of an Illinois newspaper, and a pamphlet from the same quarter, all which contained highly interesting matter relative to the question then undecided in your State; I presume I am indebted to thy kindness for those documents, for which I feel greatly obliged. The letter of Thos. Jefferson addressed to thyself, is very interesting, and I have it in contemplation to cause it to be printed in a tract form, for general distribution, provided such use of it, may be altogether agreeable to thee.

I have indulged myself with a hope that it may be within the range of probability, that thee will make a visit to Philadelphia ere long. Not anything would give me more pleasure than thy presence in our city, and that gratification would be increased by thy making my house thy home. I have much more to communicate

than I have leisure now to put on paper, as we are to-day preparing to return, on the morrow, to our house in town.

With sincere regard I remain thy friend,

ROBERTS VAUX.

To EDWARD COLES,
Governor of Illinois,
Edwardsville.

The following letter giving an account of the absurd attempt of Lieutenant-Governor Hubbard, to usurp the office of Governor, will revive the history of a strange and ludicrous transaction. It also alludes to the libel suits instituted against the Governor for his just criticisms on the scandalous conduct of the judge who tried the case against him for freeing his slaves.

On the 22nd of June, 1825, Governor Coles notified Lieutenant-Governor Hubbard that he would be absent from the State after the 18th of July, and that the duties of the Executive would devolve on him during his absence, which would not be longer than about three months. Coles returned to the State on the 31st of October, 1825, and entered on the discharge of his duties, being recognized as Governor by all the Executive officers of the State. Hubbard having been the acting Governor for about ten weeks, and being pleased with his position, concluded that it would

be a good thing to hold on to it. He therefore set up the claim that Governor Coles, by absenting himself from the State, had abdicated and forfeited the office, and that he, as Lieutenant Governor, was entitled to it. On the 2nd of November, and two days after Coles had assumed the duties of his office, Hubbard issued a commission appointing Wm. L. D. Ewing Paymaster General, and requested the Secretary of State to countersign and seal the commission. This the Secretary, George Forquer, refused to do. Then Ewing applied to the Supreme Court for a *mandamus* to compel Forquer to sign his commission, and the motion was heard by the full court at Vandalia, at the December term, 1825. The court assumed that its decision would decide the question whether Coles or Hubbard was Governor of the State. Able opinions were given by justices Lockwood and Smith, and the court unanimously decided that it would not award the mandamus. Hubbard then went to the Legislature, but with no better success than he had before the Court. Not much is now known of "Lieutenant Governor Hubbard."

In 1826 a new election for Governor took place, and there were three candidates—Ninian Edwards, Thomas C. Sloo, and Adolphus Frederick

Hubbard. The latter gentleman having failed to step into the shoes of Governor Coles, offered himself as a candidate before the people. As a part of a picture of the times and as illustrative of what a candidate thought of himself and of the people, Governor Ford, in his history of Illinois, gives one of Hubbard's speeches in the canvass. "Fellow citizens," said he, "I offer myself as a candidate before you, for the office of Governor. I do not pretend to be a man of extraordinary talents; nor do I claim to be equal to Julius Cæsar, or Napoleon Bonaparte, nor yet to be as great a man as my opponent, Governor Edwards. Nevertheless, I think I can govern you pretty well. I do not think it will require a very extraordinary smart man to govern you; for to tell you the truth, fellow citizens, I do not believe you will be very hard to govern no how."

Lieutenant-Governor Hubbard was at Washington in the winter of 1824, and at the time that Ninian Edwards resigned his seat in the Senate on being appointed Minister to Mexico. He took it into his head that he could advance his own fortunes by this resignation, and he prevailed on the Senator to entrust him with his letter of resignation to take in person to Governor Coles. As to how he pro-

ceeded, I will let Governor Coles speak, in a letter to his brother-in-law, the Hon. Andrew Stevenson, afterwards Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and dated April 7th, 1824:

"On the last day of March the Lieutenant-Governor of this State (Hubbard) arrived here from Washington, where he had been on a visit, bringing me the official notice of the resignation of Ninian Edwards. *He told me* Mr. Cook and Mr. Edwards had induced him to come on, under the belief that I would either resign my office and accept a seat in the Senate from him, or confer it on him. It was with some difficulty that I could restrain my indignation at the idea of thus sneaking into the Senate, or of sending to it such a simpleton as my Lieutenant."

From the speech of Hubbard above quoted, and from what is generally known of him at the present day, I think the verdict will be that Governor Coles was right when he called him a "simpleton."

Governor Coles to Roberts Vaux.

VANDALIA, ILLINOIS, February 8, 1826.

My Dear Sir:—When I had the happiness to enjoy your society last summer in Philadelphia, you were so kind as to express a wish to hear from me on my return to this State. I should long since have fulfilled the promise then made you to comply with this request, which I felt was as flattering to me, as it was kind in you; but for a mass of business which had accumulated during my absence, the preparation for the meeting, and

the labor and interruption attendant on the session of the Legislature, which adjourned a few days since; and the novel and extraordinary efforts made by some of my old political opponents to supplant me in the office of Governor, by thrusting in my place the Lieutenant-Governor, a zealous and thorough-going advocate of Slavery. I had heard nothing of this intention (for although many letters were written to me, it so happened not one ever came to hand, or has since been heard of) until I reached Louisville on my way home, when I was told by a friend that he had been informed by a distinguished opponent of mine that it had been determined that I should not be permitted to resume the office of Governor. On my arriving in the State, I found that there had been several caucuses held in different places, by what are called the knowing ones, for the purpose of devising the best mode of proceeding, and of organizing their forces to act against me. All the Executive officers of the State recognizing me as Governor, I found no difficulty in entering at once on the duties of the office. The Lieutenant-Governor, however, still remained at the seat of Gov't, contending that I had vacated the office by my absence from the State, and that he was, under the constitution, the acting Governor. On the meeting of the Supreme Court he applied for a mandamus against the Secretary of State. The court refused the mandamus on an incidental point, and got rid of the main question without deciding it. Soon after this the General Assembly met, and efforts were made to induce it to recognize the Lieutenant as the acting Governor; but these efforts having failed, he made a communication to both Houses, setting forth his claims to the office of Governor, and asking to be heard by himself or counsel in support of them. Nothing was done with this com-

munication, there being only *one* member in *each* House openly in favor of the Lieutenant-Governor's pretensions. There would doubtless have been more if there had been any prospect of ousting me. I attribute the unexpected unanimity to the circumstance of the question having been stirred in time to afford the people an opportunity of making known their opinions and feelings to their Representatives, previous to their leaving home to take their seats in the Legislature. The current of public opinion on this question was too strong in my favor to be resisted by any but a most desperate antagonist. This effort of my opponents has recoiled very much to my advantage, in weakening their popularity, and adding to the strength of mine.

You will recollect my having shown you last summer some strictures, which I had been induced to publish on the judge's opinion in the malicious suit which had been instituted against me for freeing my negroes, in consequence of several extraordinary errors of fact, as well as of law, which it contained, and the unusual pains taken by the judge to publish and circulate these errors to my injury. Two actions have been instituted against me for this publication—one by the court—the other in the name of the judge as an individual, in which he has laid his damages at $5,000. The former is to be tried at Edwardsville next month—the latter at this place in April. The original suit, or mother of the judge's twin-suits, is still pending in our Supreme Court, and is expected will be decided at the June term. I trust I shall get rid of all of these suits in the course of the spring and summer. I feel the more anxious to do so as they are the first suits that ever were instituted against me.

I have not heard anything of the pamphlets which you were so good as to promise to send me. I shall go

to St. Louis in about a month, when I hope to receive them. I see noticed in the public prints a new pamphlet, published by G. and C. Carville, at New York, on the emancipation and removal of the slaves of the U. S. If you could conveniently lay your hands on this pamphlet, you would confer a favor on me by sending it to me by mail. May I ask the favor of you to hand to Mr. Fry the enclosed five dollar note, and request him to forward the National Gazette to William Wilson (Chief Justice of the State), Carmi, White county, Illinois.

I beg you to present my kind regards to Mrs. Vaux, and to accept my grateful acknowledgments for your very kind and truly friendly attentions to me while in Philadelphia; and permit me again to renew to you the assurances of my obligations to you for the services rendered to humanity and to Illinois during the late vile effort to prostitute their rights and character, and to repeat that the virtuous and benevolent interest you evinced on that occasion will ever endear you to

EDWARD COLES.

ROBERTS VAUX, Esq.,
Philadelphia.

The above letter of Governor Coles contains further evidence of the judicial persecution to which he was subjected. In a temperate article in a newspaper he made a legitimate criticism on some of the outrageous and indefensible rulings of Judge McRoberts, in the case of Madison county against him, for freeing his slaves in the State, without giving bonds. Eagerly seizing hold of this publication, the Judge had the gross

indelicacy to go before the Grand Jury of his own Court, and by virtue of his official influence and position he procured an indictment for libel against Governor Coles. As that was not enough, he commenced a civil suit against the Governor, laying his damages at five thousand dollars. This action of McRoberts was as malicious as was the suit of Madison county, as the sequel proved. A *nolle prosequi* was entered in the case of the indictment and the civil suit was never brought to trial. The following letter of Governor Coles to A. Cowles, the Circuit Attorney, shows that he never consented to the dismissal of the indictment, and that he was determined to probe McRobert's conduct to the bottom. It is to be regretted that the answer of the Circuit Attorney is not to be found to publish with the letter of Governor Coles.

EDWARDSVILLE, Aug. 16, 1826.

Dear Sir:—Believing that I should have been able to prove that I had not libeled Judge McRoberts, and explain how the Grand Jury had been induced to present me for so doing, it was with great regret that I heard you had thought proper to dismiss the prosecution. Fearing that some malicious person may misrepresent this transaction at some future day, when those who now understand it may have forgotten many of the details in relation to it, or perhaps be dead, or have removed from the country, I have determined to ask the

favor of you to give me a written answer to the following questions:

Did you summon or request Judge McRoberts to appear before the Grand Jury, which presented me for libeling him?

Did not Judge McRoberts request to see the indictment before it was delivered to the Grand Jury, and did he not examine and alter it, and if so what were the alterations made by him?

Did you ask Mr. Blackwell to aid you in the prosecution of me, and do you know whether he was employed by Judge McRoberts to do so?

As you have expressed the opinion verbally to several persons, that I had not libeled Judge McRoberts, I ask the favor of you to give me your opinion in writing, whether the matter contained in the indictment was a libel?

With great respect, I am &c., &c.,

EDWARD COLES.

A. COWLES, ESQ.,
Circuit Attorney,
Edwardsville.

P. S.—Why was not Judge McRoberts returned as a witness, on the back of the indictment?

What will be remarked in regard to Governor Coles, is that the subject of Slavery was always uppermost in his mind and that he lost no opportunity in enforcing his views. The following letter to his brother-in-law, John Rutherford, who had just been elected to the Virginia Legislature, exhibits the deep interest he felt in ameliorating the condi-

tions of Slavery in his native commonwealth of Virginia.

Extract from a letter from Governor Coles to John Rutherford.

VANDALIA, July 5, 1826.

I give you many thanks, my dear Sir, for your long and truly affectionate letter of February, and assure you, I feel great contrition for having so long delayed the expression of them, and of saying how much gratified I was at perusing your kind letter, and the glad tidings it gave me of the health and happiness of our dear Emily and her little ones; and also the pleasure I have since derived at finding from the newspapers in what a flattering manner your fellow citizens have elected you to represent them in the Legislature.

I am greatly gratified at your election, not only from the regard I have for you as a man, &c., and the consequent interest I take in, and the pleasure I derive from your success ; but I am particularly so in seeing men of your principles in relation to negro Slavery in the Councils of Virginia, as it cheers me with the hope that something will soon be done to repudiate the unnatural connection which has there so long existed between the freest of the free and the most slavish of slaves.

Even if it were feasible, from the extraordinary apathy in the great mass of the people, and the zeal displayed by many to perpetuate the evil, I could not hope for speedy emancipation, but I do trust for the honor as well as interest of the State that ameliorating laws will be speedily passed, which will gradually have the effect of reconciling and habituating the masters, and preparing the slaves for a change which, as Mr. Jefferson says, must sooner or later take place with or without the con-

sent of the masters. It behooves Virginia to move in this great question; and it is a solemn duty which her politicians owe to their country, to themselves, and to their posterity, to look ahead and make provision for the future, and secure the peace, prosperity and glory of their country.

The policy of Virginia for some years past has been most unfortunate. So far from acting as if Slavery were an evil which ought to be gotten rid of, every measure which could be taken has been taken to perpetuate it, as if it were a blessing. Her political pilots have acted like the inexperienced navigator, who, to get rid of the slight inconvenience of the safety-valves have hermetically sealed them, not foreseeing that the inevitable consequence will be the bursting of the boiler, and dreadful havoc among all on board. No law has been passed under the *commonwealth* to ameliorate the black code of the *colony* of Virginia; on the contrary, new laws have been passed, adding to the oppression of the unfortunate negroes, and which have not only abridged the rights of humanity, but of the citizen. Such is the character of the law which restricts, and to a great degree prohibits the master from manumitting his slave. The idea should be ever present to the politicians of Virginia, that the state of Slavery is an unnatural state, and cannot exist forever; it must come to an end by consent or by force; and if by consent, it must from all experience, as from the nature of things, be preceded by ameliorating laws, which will have the effect of gradually and imperceptibly loosening the bonds of servitude.

Nothing is more erroneous than the idea which is entertained by many, that ameliorating laws, and especially manumissions, are productions of insurrections among the slaves. The history of the British and

Spanish West Indies shows that in those Islands where they have prevailed most, the slaves have behaved best, and insurrections have occurred oftenest where the slaves have been most oppressed and manumissions most restricted. Indeed, we never hear of insurrections in the Spanish Islands, where the slaves are most under the protection of the law, and where there are no restrictions on manumissions. Virginia should repeal the law against emancipation, prohibit the domestic slave trade—which is nearly allied in all its odious features to the African slave trade—restrict the power of the master in disposing of his slaves, by preventing him from separating the child from its parent, the husband from his wife, etc., and if possible, connect the slave under proper modifications to the soil, or at least to the vicinity of his birth; instruct the slaves especially in the duties of Religion; extend to them the protection of the laws, and punish severity in the master, and when cruelly exercised by him, it should vest the right in the slave to his freedom; or to be sold at an assessed valuation. These and many other provisions might be adopted which would have a most salutary effect, and especially the Spanish provision, which gives the right to the slave to buy a portion of his time as soon as he can procure the means, either by his own labor or by the bounty of others; thus, for instance, suppose a negro worth $600, on his paying $100, he is entitled to one day in each week, and so on. In connection with the emancipation of slaves, I should provide for the removal by bounty and otherwise, of free negroes from the country, as the natural difference, and unfortunate prejudice existing between the whites and blacks would make it the interest of both to be separated. This subject is too big for a letter, and I can only add, that if I could see ameliorating laws adopted, if I did

not live to see the emancipation, I should at least die with the happy consolation of believing that measures were in progress for the consummation of ultimate justice to the descendants of the unfortunate African; and that my country, and the descendants of my family, if not my nephews and nieces, would lie down in peace and safety, and would not have entailed on them an unnatural and odious system, productive of strife, enmity and war, between themselves and their domestics. I was in hopes to have been able by this time to have informed you and my other friends of the result of the malicious suit instituted against me for freeing my negroes, and which is pending in our Supreme Court. The case was argued last week, but the court has adjourned to the 1st Monday of January next, without deciding it. I was much disappointed in not getting a decision; I have however but little fear as to the result.

The views of Governor Coles on the pardoning power, which we give in the following letter, are worthy of the fullest consideration by all vested with such authority.

Governor Coles to Daniel Hay.

VANDALIA, Sept. 17, 1824.

Dear Sir:—Your letter of the 11th inst., with the accompanying documents, has just been received, and has produced, as you may imagine, some embarrassment. The power of pardoning is the most unpleasant duty which devolves on the Executive. *It is not proper that he should so exercise this power as to arrest and defeat the regular course and intent of the law; but that it should be only used as a shield to protect the unfortu-*

nate in extraordinary cases of hardship, when the law has an operation not intended or contemplated. I do not feel myself sufficiently acquainted with the circumstances of the case now presented to decide whether it is one of that extraordinary character which would justify the Executive in arresting the sentence pronounced upon it by the proper tribunal. To give time for the receipt of further information, and more reflection, and to afford an opportunity for further development of the guilt or innocence of the parties concerned, in the trial of the other two Shipleys, which it is presumed will take place in Nov. next, I have determined to suspend the execution of the sentence of the court until the 15th of Dec., before which time it is hoped every necessary information will be received to enable me to act correctly on the subject. In the meantime, those who take an interest in the case will have an opportunity of making the facts and their wishes known; and I shall have it in my power of seeing and conversing on the subject with Judge Wilson, yourself and other persons, who will assemble at Vandalia at the meeting of the General Assembly.

Accompanying this letter I send a reprieve of Cotner, as stated above, until Dec. 15.

In haste, I am, with much respect, your friend,

EDWARD COLES.

DANIEL HAY, Esq.

Owing to a defect in the law for the election of electors for President and Vice President of the United States, Governor Coles was obliged to convene an extra session of the General Assembly, to meet prior to the time fixed for the regular session.

This extra session was called for November 18, 1824, and its duty was to "legalize and render effective the vote of the State in the election of a President and Vice President of the United States," and to afford "an earlier opportunity of electing a Senator to the Congress of the United States in the place of Ninian Edwards."*

The message sent by Governor Coles to this extra session of the General Assembly, is one of the ablest and most statesman-like documents ever transmitted by any Governor of the State. Admirable in temper and style, it is marked by wise and sagacious recommendations. He called attention to "the remnant of African Slavery which still existed in the State," and entreated the Assembly, in view of the rejection of the people of the principle and policy of personal Slavery, to make provision for its speedy abolition. He adverted to the infamous black laws then in existence, and the ineffective and inefficient laws against the unnatural crime of kidnapping. "To put an end to that nefarious traffic is the imperious duty of the Legislature. There can come before you no subject with a more direct appeal to the generous feelings of hu-

*Mr. Edwards had resigned his seat in the Senate to accept the appointment of Minister to Mexico. John McLean, a pro-Slavery and Convention man, was elected to fill out his vacancy.

manity, or with stronger claims on your sense of justice, than the exposed and defenseless condition of free persons of color." The stay-laws were strongly condemned, and the Assembly was urged to repeal them. The interference of the Legislature with contracts, he said, "had a tendency to destroy punctuality, to impair confidence and injure the character of a community. It is not less the duty than the true policy of a Government strictly to comply with all its own engagements, and to enforce punctuality upon its citizens. It should then be borne in mind that character is capital, and that a people desirous of increasing their resources and promoting their prosperity, should preserve their faith inviolate."

On the subject of education, the Governor says:

"There is no subject claiming the attention of the Legislature of more vital importance to the welfare of the State, and its future greatness and respectability, than the provision which should be made for the education of the rising and succeeding generations. Intelligence and virtue are the main pillars in the temple of liberty. A government founded on the sovereignty of the people, and resting on, and controlled by them, cannot be respectable, or even long endure, unless they are enlightened. To preserve and hand down to a continuous line of generations, that liberty which was obtained by the valor and virtue of our forefathers, we must make provision for the moral and intellectual improve-

ment of those who are to follow us, and who are to inherit and have the disposal of the inestimable boon of self-government."

In this message the Governor renewed his recommendation in regard to the Illinois and Michigan canal, and gave to the General Assembly some excellent advice touching the selection of judges. He said:

"It is one of the most important and responsible duties you will have to perform during the present session, when it is recollected that the judges are now to be appointed during good behavior—that they will occupy the most important station in society, that our lives and fortunes may depend on their wisdom and virtue—it should awaken in the members the most serious reflections on the importance of their choice and their obligations to lay aside personal prejudices and partialities, and assidiously endeavor to select the best men—those distinguished for their capacity, their acquirements, and their moral character."

The great event during Governor Coles' administration was the visit of Lafayette to Illinois, in May, 1825. In the month of December previous, the Legislature of the State had extended to the General a most cordial and pressing invitation to visit Illinois. This invitation was forwarded by Governor Coles, accompanied by an appropriate letter. It is a singular fact, that Lafayette found

as Governor of Illinois, the young man whose acquaintance he had made in Paris only seven years before. In answering the invitation of Governor Coles, Lafayette expressed all the happiness he felt in finding the Chief Magistrate of Illinois a personal friend, whom he requested to receive the assurances of his affectionate regard.

General Lafayette from New Orleans wrote the following letter, a *fac-simile* of which is inserted:

Lafayette to Edward Coles.

NEW ORLEANS, April 12th, 1825.

My Dear Sir:—Notwithstanding many expostulations I have received on the impossibility to perform between the 22nd of February, and the 15th of June, the tour of visits which I would have been very unhappy to relinquish, for we arrived thus far, my companions and myself, and I don't doubt but that by rapid movements, can gratify my ardent desire to see every one of the Western States, and yet to fulfill a sacred duty as the representative of the Revolutionary Army, on the half secular jubilee of Bunker Hill. But to do it, my dear Sir, I must avail myself of the kind indulgent proposal made by several friends to meet me on some point near the river, in the State of Illinois—I will say, could Kaskaskia or Shawneetown suit you to pass one day with me? I expect to leave St. Louis on the 29th of April, but being engaged to a day's visit at Gen. Jackson's, I might be at Shawneetown on the 8th of May, if you don't take me directly from St. Louis to Kaskaskia or some other

place. Excuse the hurry of my writing, as the post is going, and receive in this private letter, for indeed, to the Governor I would not know how to apologize for so polite proposals, receive, I say, my high and affectionate regard.

LAFAYETTE.

Will you be pleased to forward the enclosed letter.

His Excellency, GOVERNOR COLES, Illinois.

On the 28th of the same month Governor Coles addressed the General the following letter, a *facsimile* of which is also inserted:

Governor Coles to General Lafayette.

EDWARDSVILLE, April 28, 1825.

Dear Sir:—This will be handed to you by my friend and aid-de-camp, Col. William Schuyler Hamilton,* who

* A word as to Wm. S. Hamilton may not be amiss, as he was one of the earliest settlers of Illinois, and lived in the State during the administration of Governor Coles. He was appointed by the Governor as his aid-de-camp, with the rank of Colonel, soon after his installation into office. He was the son of ALEXANDER HAMILTON, and his name was William Stephen, not William *Schuyler* Hamilton, as written by Governor Coles. He was born in New York August 4, 1797, and was admitted to the West Point Military Academy in 1814, and resigned in 1817. He left his home in New York and settled at an early day in Sangamon county, Illinois. He was United States Deputy Surveyor of the Public Lands, and in that capacity surveyed the township in which Springfield now stands. In 1824 he was elected a member of the House of Representatives from Sangamon county. In 1827 he emigrated from this State to the "Fever River Lead Mines." He commenced mining for lead ore at a point soon known as "Hamilton's Diggins," now Wiota, in Lafayette county, Wisconsin. I knew Colonel Hamilton well from 1841 to 1849, when he emigrated to California. He occupied a prominent position in Southwestern Wisconsin, and was a well-known Whig politician. He was

New Orleans April 12th 1825

My Dear Sir

Notwithstanding many Representations, I have received on the impossibility to perform between the 22 February and 15th of June the tour of Bilis which I would have been very happy to relinquish, we are arrived thus far my

His Excellency Governor Coles Illinois

I take particular pleasure in introducing to you, as the son of your old and particular friend, Gen. Alexander Hamilton. As it is not known when you will arrive at St. Louis, or what will be your intended route from thence, Col. Hamilton is posted there for the purpose of waiting on you as soon as you shall arrive, and ascertaining from you, and making known to me, by what route you propose to return to the eastward, and

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a member of the House of Representatives in the Territorial Legislature of Wisconsin in 1842–3. He died in Sacramento, California, October 9, 1850. For nineteen years neither stone nor slab marked the spot where reposed his ashes. When the careless grave-digger threw his shovelfuls of earth on his coffin, little could he have thought he was covering the remains of a son of Alexander Hamilton, in my judgment the greatest of all American statesmen. Colonel Hamilton was brave, generous, hospitable and humane; and unusually quick in perception and decided in action. In 1879, Cyrus Woodman, Esq., of Cambridge, Massachusetts, who was long a resident of Mineral Point, Wisconsin, and a devoted friend of Colonel Hamilton, purchased a lot in the cemetery of Sacramento, and marked the grave with granite head and foot-stones. On the polished surface of the head-stone he placed the following inscription:

COL. WM. S. HAMILTON,
SON OF
GENERAL ALEXANDER HAMILTON,
WAS BORN IN NEW YORK,
AUG. 4, 1797.
HE WAS AN EARLY SETTLER AND PROMINENT
CITIZEN OF WISCONSIN.
COMING TO CALIFORNIA IN 1849,
HE DIED HERE OCT. 9,
1850.
IN SIZE AND FEATURE,
IN TALENT AND CHARACTER,
HE MUCH RESEMBLED HIS ILLUSTRIOUS
FATHER.

A FRIEND ERECTS THIS STONE.

when and where it will be most agreeable for you to afford me the happiness of seeing you and welcoming you to Illinois.

I am, with the greatest respect and esteem, your devoted friend,

EDWARD COLES.

GEN. LAFAYETTE.

At the reception of Lafayette in Kaskaskia, Governor Coles made the address of welcome. It was admirable in style and expression, and the Governor on the occasion gave utterance to the ruling sentiment of his life. He spoke of the progress of our country's greatness, and the arrival of the period when the philanthropist might look with confidence to *the universal restoration of man to his long lost rights, and to that station in the Creator's work, and that moral elevation to which he was destined.*" Though the seat of government had been removed from Kaskaskia, and the sceptre of empire which had been wielded there for almost a century and a half was about passing away, there yet resided in the town many men whose names have gone into the history of the State. Among those who participated in the reception ceremonies were General Edgar, Gov. Bond, Judge Nathaniel Pope, Elias Kent Kane, Lt. Gov. Menard, Col. Thomas Mather and Sidney Breese.

Edwardsville April 28. 1825

Dr. Sir:

This will be handed to you by my friend and Aid de camp Col: William Schuyler Hamilton, who I take a peculiar pleasure in introducing to

CHAPTER XVII.

VALEDICTORY MESSAGE OF GOVERNOR COLES; HIS TRIBUTE TO THOMAS JEFFERSON; HIS RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEGISLATURE; THE "BLACK CODE"; STRENGTH OF PRO-SLAVERY SENTIMENT IN THE STATE; OVERWHELMED IN 1854; THE CHARACTER OF GOVERNOR COLES' ADMINISTRATION; AFFAIRS OF THE STATE ABLY, CAREFULLY AND CONSCIENTIOUSLY ADMINISTERED; EXTRACT OF HIS LETTER TO COLONEL HAMILTON; BECOMES A CANDIDATE FOR CONGRESS IN 1831; HIS ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE; BEATEN BY JOSEPH DUNCAN, THE JACKSON CANDIDATE; APPRECIATION OF GOVERNOR COLES BY JUDGE GILLESPIE AND JUDGE CATON; COLES COUNTY NAMED AFTER HIM; REMOVES FROM THE STATE AND SETTLES IN PHILADELPHIA IN 1833; MARRIES MISS ROBERTS; THE CHARM AND HAPPINESS OF HIS PRIVATE LIFE; HIS GRACIOUS HOSPITALITY; INTEREST IN GOOD WORKS; HIS HISTORY OF THE ORDINANCE OF 1787; DEATH IN 1868.

THE valedictory message of Governor Coles was sent to the Legislature on the 5th of December, 1826. It is mainly devoted to the affairs of the State. He made however, a touching allusion to the deaths of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams on the 4th of July preceding, "thus sanctioning by their deaths, a day rendered glorious by the most important event of their lives, and in the history of their country." To Mr. Jefferson, to whom he was allied by so many ties of sympathy and of friendship, he paid a just and eloquent tribute, de-

scribing him as a "sage and a philanthropist, as a Statesman and a patriot, the author of the Declaration of Independence, the great political reformer to whose strong, bold and original genius, we are in a great degree indebted for our civil and religious freedom and for our correct understanding of the *rights of men* and of nations." Mr. Jefferson's bold and outspoken sentiments on the subject of Slavery had challenged the profoundest respect and admiration of Governor Coles. He again earnestly appealed to the Legislature to put an end to the remnant of Slavery in the State and to "make the laws in relation to that unfortunate class of our fellow beings, the descendants of Africa, less repugnant to our political institutions and local situation." * * "It is also requisite that provision should be made not only for loosening the fetters of servitude, but for the security and protection of free persons of color." * * "To effect which, it is indispensable that the law should be altered, and so far from considering every colored person a Slave, unless he can procure written evidence of his freedom in Illinois, every man should be presumed free, until the contrary is made to appear."

The "Black Code" of Illinois, the repeal of which Governor Coles urged so strongly and so repeat-

edly was one of the most infamous and barbarous enactments that ever disgraced a civilized State. All his appeals were disregarded, and it can be scarcely credited at this day that these disgraceful laws were not completely repealed until after the political revolution in this country which followed the repeal of the Missouri Compromise in 1854. The truth of the matter is, that a pro-Slavery sentiment found a lodgment among a portion of the people of that day in this State, and that sentiment was vastly stronger from 1825 to 1854 than it was in 1824, when the people so emphatically voted down the atrocious proposition to call a convention to make a constitution authorizing the introduction into the State of the hideous institution of human Slavery.

The administration of Governor Coles, so far as it is known by the record, and from other sources, was one of the ablest, the purest and most successful the State has ever had. He fully understood all the interests of the commonwealth, and administered its affairs carefully, intelligently and conscientiously. He gave his own personal attention to all the details of his office, and all his official correspondence is in his own handwriting. The copies of his letters were made by himself, and

are as neatly and handsomely written as the originals themselves. The *fac-simile* of the letter to Gen. Lafayette is a copy of the original found among his papers, and it is a fair specimen of the copies of all his letters, both official and personal, which he retained. Nothing can better show how carefully he watched over the interests of the State, nor more fully illustrate his ideas of official duty, than an extract of a letter, a copy of which I have before me, to Col. William S. Hamilton, dated July 26, 1826.

In the summer of 1826 a matter came up in relation to an exchange of certain lands selected as Seminary lands. Some of these lands had been settled on before their selection, and valuable improvements made. The question was, whether the State could not select other lands of equal value and leave the settlers on the lands they had improved. Governor Coles appointed Colonel Hamilton to examine the lands settled upon and those proposed to be substituted. In this letter of instructions the Governor says:

"And now I must say to you, if you undertake this business it will be expected of you that you will go in person and inspect the tracts which it is wished should be relinquished, as well as those to be substituted, and that you will take great pains to inform yourself of their

relative value, and that you will not permit your sympathy for individuals to go too far, or to induce you to lose sight of, or be inattentive to the great interest the State has in having valuable selections made, to augment as far as possible the invaluable fund which is destined to contribute so much to the character of the State, and to the knowledge and character of its citizens."

In the winter and spring of 1831, Governor Coles was invited by a large number of his friends to become a candidate for Congress at the election to take place in the following August. In a short "Address to the People of Illinois," dated Edwardsville, May 12, 1831, he accepted the invitation. He did not offer himself as the candidate of any party, and said if elected he should be faithful to the trust reposed in him, and should vote and act on all questions agreeably to the known wishes of the people, and what he believed to be their true interests—that he would not be the creature of party, nor the humble follower of any man, but, guided by republican principles, he would endeavor to promote the interest of the country; in fine, that he would not be the follower of party. or of man, but of principle. He stated what particular objects he would be in favor of, and one of which was "the subdivision and sale of lands in forty-acre tracts," a most admirable proposition, which was afterwards

enacted into a law, which proved of immense benefit to the actual settler. He would also be in favor of a reduction of the price of the public lands, and of liberal grants and appropriations of them for the promotion of internal improvements, education, and all such objects as would benefit the frontier settlers, increase the population and advance the prosperity of the State.

While the Governor announced himself as the candidate of no party, yet he was known to be an anti-Jackson man, and his candidacy drifted into an opposition to Joseph Duncan, the candidate of the Jackson party. The late Judge Breese also came out as a national republican candidate. Nothing, however, could withstand the prestige of the candidate who was running as a friend of the Jackson administration. Both Breese and Coles were overwhelmingly beaten by Duncan. The vote stood, thirteen thousand and thirty-two for Duncan, four thousand six hundred and fifty-nine for Breese, and three thousand three hundred and ninety-seven for Coles.

The number of persons now living in the State who were residents during the time that Governor Coles was a citizen, is very small. It is certain, however, that those who did know him personally, and those

who knew most in regard to him, entertained the highest degree of respect for his character, and gratitude for his services. Among those still living who were acquainted with Governor Coles during his residence in Illinois, is Judge Gillespie, to whom I have had occasion to refer more than once in this Paper. In a letter addressed to me, dated Edwardsville, February 28th, 1881, the Judge says:

"I am pleased to find that you are employed in rescuing from oblivion the life and character of one so deserving of fame as our second Governor, Edward Coles. I knew the Governor well. He lived in this place while he was a citizen of Illinois. He was a remarkable man, and devoted himself to the propagation of the sentiments of freedom. He was the most unrelenting foe to Slavery I ever knew. His time, money, everything belonging to him, was expended in the cause so dear to his heart. He brought his slaves here from Virginia, and liberated them, and gave to each head of a family, a tract of land within four miles of this place, where they settled and lived for many years. * * * * * * He was unmarried while he lived in Illinois, and when in Edwardsville, boarded in the family of James Mason. His character was without spot or blemish in all the walks of life."

The Hon. John Dean Caton, who was Judge of the Circuit and Supreme Courts of the State, and who by his long and honored service on the Bench has illustrated and adorned our judicial an-

nals, did not come to the State until after Governor Coles had removed from it. In answer to a letter from me inquiring if he had any reminiscences in regard to the Governor, he writes under date of May 10, 1881:

"I was never personally acquainted with Governor Coles, but when I came to the State forty-eight years ago, his praises were sounded by all who had opposed, with him, the Constitutional Amendment to admit Slavery. He was recognized as the great leader in that fight, and for that I learned to revere his memory."

Judge Caton has recently made a very able argument before the United States District Court at Chicago. It was in a case brought against the city of his residence, Ottawa, on certain bonds issued by the city. An attempt having been made to repudiate the bonds, the city was sued, and Judge Caton appeared for the plaintiff to uphold the validity of the bonds and the honor of his city. The Judge dwelt largely on the disgrace and impolicy of repudiation, however specious the guise might be, and referred particularly to the case of our State, which had upheld its faith under the most adverse circumstances, and paid every dollar of its indebtedness. I quote from his printed argument, in which he refers to the three great men of Illinois, one of whom was Governor Coles:

"In closing this reference to the past of our State, allow me to say that Illinois has produced three great men, whose conspicuous services will render their names immortal, and which should be commemorated by enduring monuments, and to whom we owe a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid. The first was Edward Coles, who was Governor of the State in 1824, and who saved the State from the black curse of African Slavery, then and forever. The second was Thomas Ford, who was Governor in 1842, and who saved the State from the scarcely less blighting curse of repudiation; and the third was Abraham Lincoln, who saved the Union from dismemberment, and the Nation from destruction. Not alone either of them, for all were assisted and supported by other great men whose names should be scarcely less honored, but they were the great leaders in these great labors, whose talents and whose integrity lead the people to these great accomplishments. In all time to come posterity should bow its head in gratitude whenever either of these names should be spoken."

After the expiration of Governor Coles' term of service, he continued to have his residence in Edwardsville and attending to the cultivation of his farm in the neighborhood. He was very fond of agriculture, and was the founder of the first agricultural society in the State. Without a family, having no business to tie him down, and suffering from ill-health, he spent much time at his old home in Virginia, and in Washington, Philadelphia, New York and Saratoga. At what particular time he

finally removed from the State I am not aware, but probably in the fall of 1832. I have in my hands a letter addressed to him at Edwardsville, written by General Scott, from "Fort Armstrong, Rock Island," and dated August 11th, 1832. The General had just successfully closed his campaign against Black Hawk, and had arrived at Rock Island from Prairie du Chien. As he expected to remain at Fort Armstrong for some fifteen days, and as at the expiration of that time he might have to move west against some hostile Indians, who were not captured with the other Indians of Black Hawk, he invited the Governor to make him a visit, and to bring with him a pair of blankets, saddle and bridle, and saddle-bags.

It is no part of my purpose to continue my sketch of Governor Coles subsequent to his leaving the State. After quitting Illinois he took up his residence in Philadelphia, where he had made "troops of friends," among the most distinguished and cultivated people. On the 28th of November, 1833, he was married by Bishop De Lancey to Miss Sally Logan Roberts, a daughter of Hugh Roberts, a descendant of Hugh Roberts, of Peullyn, Wales, who came to this country with William Penn, in 1682. Possessed of an ample fortune, his private

life seems to have brought to him every charm, and surrounded him with every happiness. Of a very happy, bright and cheerful disposition, he entered sympathetically into the pleasures of all, and promoted in every possible way the happiness of all. He was an affectionate husband, a devoted father and a kind friend. Governor Coles was a very little less than six feet in height; of a slender build, and strongly-marked features. His eyes were brilliant, and his countenance—particularly when lighted up by a smile—was one of rare beauty. The splendid steel engraving, by Sartain, which will illustrate this Paper, when printed, cannot but be admired.

He always took much interest in public affairs, and was in correspondence with many of the most distinguished men of the time. His "History of the Ordinance of 1787," which was read as a Paper before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, June 9, 1856, is one of the most elaborate reviews of that celebrated legislation which has ever appeared. As Illinois was within the Territory covered by that ordinance, the Governor very naturally alluded to the attempt to make it a Slave State at the time he occupied the gubernatorial chair. He said:

"I think that I shall meet with indulgence from the

zeal I have always felt in the cause, for adding that it has ever since afforded me the most delightful and consoling reflections that the abuse I endured, the labor I performed, the anxiety I felt, were not without their reward; and to have it conceded by opponents as well as supporters, that I was chiefly instrumental in preventing a call of a Convention, and in making Illinois a Slave-holding State."

In view of the services of Governor Coles, it was fitting and proper that Illinois should honor his name by giving it to a large and important county —COLES COUNTY—organized Dec. 25, 1830, out of Clark and Edgar counties.

GOVERNOR COLES died at his residence in Philadelphia, July 7th, 1868, at the ripe old age of eighty two, and after many years of much suffering, debility and general feebleness. His widow, his oldest son, Edward Coles, and a daughter, survive him. His youngest son died in February, 1862.

Governor Coles is buried at "Woodland," near Philadelphia. Though his ashes do not lie mingled with the soil of the State he served so faithfully, and to which he rendered such an inestimable service in saving it to freedom, yet his name and his memory shall live in Illinois so long as the State shall have a place in history.

INDEX.

D.

E.